

China Insights

Ming Xin

China's New Strategic Layout

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Series Foreword

Since the Opium War, modern China has come under attack and been bullied for its backwardness; this cultural circumstance has given many Chinese people a psychological inferiority complex, as China has lagged behind other countries technologically, institutionally, and culturally. Efforts to change the situation in which Western countries were strong but China was weak and to revitalize China needed to start with cultural criticism and culture renovation. Therefore, the Chinese people turned their eyes to the outside world and learned from Japan, Europe, the USA, and even Soviet Russia. We have always been overwhelmed by stress and anxiety and have had a burning desire to reverse the state of being bullied as a result of underdevelopment, poverty, and weakness and to catch up with and surpass the Western powers. In pursuing the more than one-hundred-year-old dream of building a powerful country and reviving China, we have focused on understanding and learning from others, but seldom, if ever, have others learned from and understood us. This has not greatly changed in the course of modernization since China's reform and opening up in 1978. The translation and introduction of many Western works in the 1980s and 1990s is a very good example. This is the history of the Chinese people's understanding of the relationship between China and the rest of the world since the beginning of modern times.

At the same time, in pursuing the dream of turning China into a powerful country and rejuvenating it through material (technological) criticism, institutional criticism, and cultural criticism, the Chinese people have struggled to find a path that would make the country prosperous and the people strong while preventing the country from being ruined and the race from being destroyed. This path first represents a thought, a banner, and a soul. The key issue has been what kind of thought, banner, and soul can save the country, making it prosperous and the people strong. For more than one hundred years, the Chinese people have constantly carried out experiments and attempts amidst humiliation, failure, and anxiety. They have experienced failure in adopting advanced Western technology and thought on the basis of safeguarding China's feudal system and practicing a constitutional monarchy after the collapse of the Western capitalist political path and a great setback in worldwide socialism in the early 1990s. The Chinese people ultimately

embarked on a path toward a successful revolution with national independence and liberation; in particular, they have adopted a path leading to the socialist modernization of China—a road toward socialism with Chinese characteristics—by combining the theoretical logic of scientific socialism with the historical logic of China’s social development. After more than 30 years of reform and opening up, China’s socialist market economy has rapidly developed; tremendous achievements have been made in economic, political, cultural, and social constructions; comprehensive national strength, cultural soft power, and international influence have substantially improved; and a great success has been achieved in socialism with Chinese characteristics. Although the latter project has not yet become full-fledged, its systems and institutions have basically taken shape. After more than one hundred years of pursuing dreams, China is rising among the nations of the world with a greater degree of confidence in the path it has chosen, the theory it has adopted, and the institutions it has created.

Meanwhile, we should be aware that given the long-standing cognition and cultural psychology of learning from Western countries; we seldom take the initiative in showcasing ourselves—historical China and current China in reality—to the world, though China has emerged as a great world power. Due to a deeply rooted view that “Western countries are strong and China is weak,” developed through Western-Chinese cultural exchanges, Western people and nations seldom have a sense of Chinese history or the current developments in China, let alone an understanding of China’s developmental path and such in-depth issues as the scientificity and effectiveness of China’s theory and institutions or their unique value for and contributions to human civilization. As self-recognition is not displayed, the “China Collapse Theory,” “China Threat Theory,” “China State Capitalism,” and other so-called theories coined by certain people with ulterior motives and differing political views have been widely spread.

During our development, based on “crossing the river by feeling the stones,” we have paid attention to learning from Western countries, understanding the world and learning to know ourselves through Western experience and discourse but have neglected self-recognition and efforts to let others know us. When we strive to become part of the world in a more tolerant and friendly way, we are not objectively, truly understood. Therefore, we should describe the path to the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics, tell Chinese stories, disseminate Chinese experiences, use international expressions to show a real China to the world, and help people around the world realize that the Western manner of modernization is not the endpoint of human historical evolution and that socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a valuable treasure of human thought. This is undoubtedly a very important task for an academic cultural researcher with a sense of justice and responsibility.

In this connection, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences organized its top-notch experts and scholars and several external experts to write the *China Insights* series. This series not only provides an overview of China’s path, theories, and institutions but also objectively describes China’s current development in the areas of political institutions, human rights, the rule of law, the economic system,

finance, social governance, social security, population policies, values, religious faith, ethnic policies, rural issues, urbanization, industrialization, ecology, ancient civilization, literature, art, etc., thus depicting China in a way that helps readers visualize these topics.

We hope that this series will help domestic readers more correctly understand the course of the more than 100 years of China's modernization and more rationally look at current difficulties, enhance the urgency for and national confidence in comprehensively intensifying reform, build a consensus on reform and development and gather strength in this regard, as well as deepen foreign readers' understanding of China, thus fostering a better international environment for China's development.

January 2014

Zhao Jianying

Contents

- 1 Strategic Vision: The Chinese Dream 1**
 - 1 Rich Connotation of the Chinese Dream 1
 - 1.1 Political Implications of the Chinese Dream 1
 - 1.2 Rich Connotations of the Chinese Dream 3
 - 2 Basic Principles of the Chinese Dream 4
 - 2.1 The “Popular Version” of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics 5
 - 2.2 The Historical Logic of the Chinese Dream 6
 - 3 Global Significance of the Chinese Dream 8
 - 3.1 At a Practical Level, the Chinese Dream Is a Dream of Peace, Development, Cooperation and a Win-Win Outcome 8
 - 3.2 At the Theoretical Level: the Chinese Dream Shares Similarities with the Dreams of People from Countries Around the World, Including the American Dream 11
 - 3.3 At the Level of Civilization: Different Civilizations Produce Different Behavioral Patterns and Different Value Evaluations 13
 - 3.4 Routes for Realizing the Chinese Dream 16
 - 3.5 Practical Requirements for the Chinese Dream 18
- 2 Strategic Goal: Building a Well-off Society in an All-around Way 21**
 - 1 The Theoretical Origin of a Well-off Society 21
 - 1.1 Deng Xiaoping Proposed a Well-off Society 21
 - 1.2 New Positioning of the Stage of Social Development to Progress Towards the Next-highest Level 23
 - 2 Evolution of the Connotation of a Well-off Society 25
 - 3 “Generally” Does not Amount to “All-around”. 29

4	Obstacles to and Challenges for Building a Well-off Society	31
4.1	There are Doubts About the Manner of Achieving Wealth	31
4.2	The Social Lifestyle is Exposed to a Number of Hidden Troubles	32
4.3	There is an Urgent Need to Improve the Public Service Mode	33
4.4	The Costs of Social Transformation Increasingly Build up	33
5	Cultural Development in Building a Well-off Society in an All-around Way	34
5.1	Hard Requirements at the Ideological Level	34
5.2	Hard Requirements at the Level of Spiritual Home	35
5.3	Hard Requirements at the Level of Practice Among People	37
6	Political Advantages of a Well-off Society	39
6.1	Political Advantages Depend Upon Political Goals	39
6.2	The Inevitable Choice of China's Political Advantages	40
6.3	Political Advantages Must be Protected and Conserved	42
	References	44
3	Strategic Measures: Comprehensively Intensifying the Reform	45
1	Build a New Consensus for Reform	45
2	Achieve the Transformation of the Reform	51
2.1	Directly Confront the Reform	51
2.2	Reignite the Motivational Power for the Reform	53
2.3	Identify the Possibility of Transforming the Reform and Achieve It	55
3	Establish a Scientific Outlook on Reform	56
3.1	The Orientation of the Value of the Reform Should be Scientific, and the Reform Must be People-Oriented	56
3.2	The Positioning of the Main Reform Participants Should be Scientific and the Reform Must be Carried Out by the People	57
3.3	The Reform's Line of Thought Should be Scientific, and the Reform Should be Based on Dialectical Thought	59
3.4	The Choice of the Path Towards Reform Should be Scientific, and the Reform Should be Carried Out in a Standardized and Thorough Way	60
3.5	Gather the Positive Energy of the Reform	60

3.6	In Accelerating the Reform in a Constant Way, Responsibilities Should Be Assumed.	61
3.7	In Comprehensive Intensification, Overall Arrangements Should be Made Within the Reform	63
3.8	In Tackling Difficulties, Authority is Needed for the Reform.	65
4	China's Path in the Reform of the Political System	66
4.1	Changes in the Economic Foundation and Progress in the Superstructure	66
4.2	Four Driving Forces for the Reform of the Political System.	71
4.3	A Clear Distinction Between the Body of the Political System and Its Function	77
4.4	Entry Point and Breakthrough in the Reform of the Political System.	82
	References.	86
4	Strategic Guarantee: Governing the Country Under the Rule of Law in an All-Around Way	87
1	Theoretical Self-consciousness About State Governance.	87
1.1	Defining What State Governance Should Look like.	88
1.2	Figuring Out the Possibility of Exercising State Governance	89
1.3	Take a Firm Stand on the Necessity for National Governance	91
1.4	Accomplish Many Changes for National Governance	93
2	Operation of the Systems Behind the Rule of Law.	94
2.1	Respect the Institutions and Develop an Institutional Awareness	94
2.2	Attach Importance to the Institutions, but Break Away from Institutional Myths	95
3	Practical Logic of Governing China Under the Rule of Law.	97
3.1	Accurate Functional Positioning	97
3.2	Firm Self-consciousness Along the Path	100
3.3	Distinctive Value Pursuit.	103
3.4	Comprehensive Rule-of-Law System.	106
4	The Logic of the Rule of Law Behind the Core Substance.	111
4.1	The Rule of Law Needs a Direction, and the Party's Leadership is the Political Guarantee for the Rule of Law.	111
4.2	The Rule of Law Cannot Be Separated from the Institutional Environment, and the Socialist System with Chinese Characteristics Is the Institutional Guarantee for the Rule of Law.	113

4.3	The Road Shall Be Properly Dealt with Through Reason, and the Socialist Rule-of-Law Theory with Chinese Characteristics Is the Theoretical Support for the Rule of Law.	115
	References.	116
5	Strategic Support: Comprehensively Strengthen Party Discipline	119
1	Keep the Lifeline of the Political Party.	119
1.1	Figure Out Who the Masses Are and How to Contact Them.	120
1.2	Make the Practical Educational Activities Focus on the Improvement of the Working Style.	123
1.3	Practice the Spirit of Rectifying Incorrect Work Styles to Carry Out Criticism and Self-criticism.	124
1.4	Fundamentally, Put the Masses First	126
2	Continue to Combat Corruption and Uphold the Integrity of the Road Towards Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.	128
2.1	Foster Idealism in Combating Corruption and Upholding Integrity.	129
2.2	Attach Importance to Prevention	131
2.3	Be Bold and Skillful at Mobilizing the Masses to Combat Corruption	133
3	Increase the Scientific Level of Party Building	134
3.1	The Changed and Unchanged Aspects of the Party: Give Clear Answers Under the Guidance of Scientific Theories.	134
3.2	Substance and Procedure: Building Scientific Institutions—"Two Wings of a Bird", "Two Wheels of a Vehicle"	136
3.3	Information Network Technology: The Scientific Methods that Reflect the Characteristics of the Times Add Luster to Party Building	138
4	Consolidate the Foundation and Cultivate Vitality with Faith.	141
4.1	The Communist Party of China Is a Political Party with Faith	141
4.2	The Communist Party of China's Faith Is a Scientific One	143
4.3	Practicing Faith Is the Source of Strength for the Communist Party of China	145
	References.	147

6 Strategic Confidence: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Is a Great Chapter	149
1 Confidence in Our Path.	149
1.1 Fundamental Direction for the Development and Progress of Contemporary China	150
1.2 Basic Requirements of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	151
1.3 The Five-in-One Overall Layout of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	153
1.4 The Times-Specific Self-consciousness of China's Road.	154
2 Theoretical Confidence	159
2.1 Consistent Thought Inheritance	160
2.2 Theoretical Quality: Well Targeted	161
2.3 Chinese Manner: Self-consciousness and Confidence	162
2.4 The Spirit of the Times: Innovative Development	163
3 Institutional Confidence.	164
3.1 Objective Requirements for the Cause of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	164
3.2 Natural Practice of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	166
3.3 Composition of the System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	168
3.4 Concentrated Reflection on the Characteristics and Advantages of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	169
4 Cultural Confidence.	171
4.1 Spiritual Independence Is the Precondition for the Economic and Political Independence of a Society	171
4.2 Chinese Culture Is an Inexhaustible Source for the Spiritual Independence of Chinese Society.	174
4.3 Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Is Rooted in the Fertile Soil of Chinese Culture	176
4.4 The Realization of Chinese Culture Amidst Innovative Development Is the "Present Progressive" Tense.	177
References.	179
Conclusion	181
References	187
Index	189

Introduction: The New Layout of the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy

The revival of a great power relies on strategy, and the key for a great power to prevail in competition also lies in strategy. If the strategy is good, progress can be accomplished; if the strategy is excellent, a win will occur. The Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy is a strategy developed in contemporary China during its move toward the rejuvenation of the nation.

A new layout of the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy—building a well-off society in an all-around way, comprehensively intensifying reform, governing the country under the rule of law in a comprehensive way, and comprehensively strengthening Party discipline, which are the four prongs identified during the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China as well as by General Secretary Xi Jinping during his inspection of Jiangsu Province—took shape in less than three years.

The new layout of the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy is not a simple arrangement of four comprehensive moves in parallel; instead, it embodies the clear understanding of members of the Communist Party of China about potential hardships and their sense of responsibility.

The Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy should be understood by gaining insight into the strategic thought of the new-generation members of the Communist Party of China, represented by Xi Jinping in governing the country and handling state affairs, and by considering the greatest dream in contemporary China and the “new normal” in its development.

One goal and three initiatives constitute the basic connotation of the strategic layout. The Chinese dream is the strategic vision that leads the strategic layout, while the mental state and determination of the new normal of development signify strategic confidence in forming that layout.

Specifically, to realize the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, a “comprehensive” approach is required because achievements are insufficient and even impossible if no “comprehensive” approach is available.

- If a well-off society is not built in an all-around way, the majority will be hidden by the average, and an accomplishment will obscure a number of failures. To build a well-off society in an all-around way, every aspect must be addressed, and no one can be left behind. If a certain nationality, a certain group, or even an individual fails to become well-off in Chinese society, then the society is not well-off across the board. If only economic data reach the established targets but there are weaknesses in political development, social harmony, ecology, and the people's well-being, then Chinese society has not become well-off in an all-around way.
- If reform is not comprehensively intensified or if great efforts are first made in some areas while there is just empty talk regarding other areas, then reform will become unbalanced and lame, will produce a smaller effect, and might even cause negative change, becoming a protective cloak for some people and groups to seize social wealth and illegally seek personal gains. Thus, there will be no fairness and justice, and social estrangement and confrontations will become worse.
- Governing the country under the rule of law became a strategy 17 years ago, but there is still a large gap between the practice and the people's expectations because "comprehensive" efforts are not sufficiently made. A legal system cannot be implemented by itself, even if it has become full-fledged. If there are no systems of efficient law enforcement, well-organized legal supervision, robust legal guarantees, and well-enhanced Party regulation, the phenomenon of laws being reduced to modeling clay or scarecrows cannot be eradicated, and it would be very difficult to build China under the rule of law.
- If no solid work is carried out, the style of work is not improved and anti-corruption campaigns are not conducted in a sweeping way, then efforts to strengthen Party discipline will be thwarted. If discipline is not strict, rules are not stressed and systems are not vigorously put into practice, then only the symptoms are treated, without addressing the root causes. If the ideal is not upheld, faith is not valued, and belief is not unwaveringly held, then the will of the people may become weak, and their soul will vanish. For the approach to be "comprehensive," it is necessary to get rid of the stale and take in the fresh, govern the Party with systems, consolidate the foundation, and cultivate vigor.

However, it is not easy to change truly "comprehensively"; if there is no strategic focus and no courage to overcome difficulties and self-revolution is not encouraged, it is impossible to change "comprehensively."

To consider various aspects, take into account various relationships and balance different interests, we cannot emphasize one point while ignoring others, we cannot stress only visible achievements and turn a blind eye to invisible achievements, and we cannot recklessly seek short-term performance within a term of office at the expense of our successors. Impressive speed, good figures, and statements with a gratifying bottom line no longer exist. If there is an insufficient strategic focus, perseverance is impossible under the new normal of development.

To comprehensively intensify reform, it is imperative to break the barrier of interests and overcome the obstructions resulting from departmental interests. To govern the country under the rule of law in an all-around way, it is essential to change the line of thought and behavioral pattern that occurred under the rule of man. To strengthen Party discipline, it is necessary to “scrape the poison off the bone,” “burn gold under raging fire,” and be reborn after a severe test. However, the risks are so high and the issues are so difficult that they reach beyond our imagination; thus, we may give up halfway if we do not have strong willpower.

More importantly, these difficulties are always associated with Party members and cadres and are even consciously or unconsciously backed by certain Party members and cadres. Some of them have become rich before the people as a whole could become rich. While the people are anxious about medical treatment, school, housing, or even daily necessities, some Party members and cadres have become extravagant. As the people have increasingly observed laws and discipline, some Party members and cadres still put their personal views above the law, use their power to suppress the law, and bend the law for personal gain. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that we should be prepared for great struggles with new historical characteristics and that self-revolution is part of these efforts. It is difficult to carry out self-revolution because it means that previous reformers become the targets of current reform; it means prompt and resolute actions, even thorough reformation; and it means self-reform. Thus, nobody has the ability and courage to do implement self-revolution without a strong consciousness and sense of responsibility.

Therefore, a clear understanding of the strategic requirements for opening a new chapter in socialism with Chinese characteristics; a keen awareness of our international and domestic risks, difficulties, and challenges; and a conscious assumption of the strategic mission to achieve a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation constitute the practical foundation for carrying out the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy and are the basis for the practical logic of that strategy.

Chapter 1

Strategic Vision: The Chinese Dream

Everyone in China talks about the Chinese dream, which is a good phenomenon. Showing interest is a prerequisite for getting things done. However, we should not pay attention to the Chinese dream merely by talking about it repeatedly or treat it as a basket in which to stuff everything. It is necessary for us to associate what we do with the Chinese dream, which represents what we want. However, we should not simply and mechanically associate words; instead, we should explain something about their essence, law and logic. This requires us to understand and explicitly describe some basic issues concerning the Chinese dream and take action to address them. On the road to a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, we should continuously expand the connotations of the Chinese dream, demonstrate its spiritual substance, explore the path to realizing it and uncover its universality to inject a positive energy into it. These are the missions and responsibilities of every member of the Communist Party of China.

1 Rich Connotation of the Chinese Dream

A person has his or her own dream; so does a country. Achieving a great rejuvenation of the nation is the greatest dream of Chinese society. We came a long and zigzag way yesterday; today we are climbing a mountain of difficulties, while the Chinese dream is guiding contemporary China to achieve its ambitions tomorrow.

1.1 Political Implications of the Chinese Dream

Some people may ask: Why is a centenary dream relentlessly pursued in such an extraordinary way in today's Chinese society? It is because it conforms to the

objective requirements of China's economic and social development and to the people's expectations.

Recent years have witnessed rapid development and tremendous achievements in Chinese society. Those in Western society who are critical of China must recognize this. However, the society is also experiencing a pessimistic mood among people who have become increasingly apathetic and confused about their future. Why? Clearly, material benefit is the motivational factor that encourages the people to strive, but it is not and cannot be their goal and destination. If the people focus only on benefit, they will become people without souls after achieving their goal. In contemporary society, the people without money struggle to make money; if they earn very little, they feel extremely unhappy, while the wealthy are spiritually barren, in pain and disoriented, though they no longer worry about money. A classic case in management science posits that if a bricklayer works just for the sake of brickwork, he or she will feel ever more tired; however, if the bricklayer believes that he or she is adding bricks to build a grand mansion, he or she will have a different feeling and mental status. Some people become extravagant before becoming rich and arrogant after becoming slightly well off due to confusion and a lack of ideals. If a person strives for his or her goals and ideals, he or she still has a willing heart to fight amidst hardships and fatigue. The Chinese dream represents exactly such a goal for Chinese society and the Chinese people and makes their endeavors meaningful.

— A dream presents a blueprint.

The primary stage of socialism is a very long, difficult historical stage. We have not yet achieved success in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, and more great efforts must be made. We should never lose heart and waver in this long historical process, for which ideals and a blueprint are important. Ideals have not disappeared in contemporary China, and socialism with Chinese characteristics is the common ideal. For most of the ordinary people, this common ideal is slightly abstract and ideological. According to the modern theory and practice of communication, the ideological content is not necessarily expressed in an ideological way, and non-ideological discourse is better positioned to unconsciously exert an influence. The Chinese dream maintains the spiritual substance and scientific value of socialism with Chinese characteristics while creatively converting it into a discourse system that will provide contemporary Chinese society and the Chinese people with a visible goal for achieving and transcending and a scientific, inspiring and lofty ideal that makes socialism with Chinese characteristics display more affinity to the society and become more concrete and clear. We must stress that being popular does not mean abandoning accuracy, and affinity does not amount to a lack of principle. If we do not figure out the connotations and denotations, essential requirements, principles and values of the Chinese dream, some people or groups may consciously or unconsciously misinterpret it selfishly so that the Chinese dream will become vague, the consensus on the dream will be disrupted and the joint forces behind it will disintegrate.

– A dream builds consensus.

An open and changing China is experiencing social transformation and differentiation in which everyone has his or her own dream and each class or group has its own dream; the appeal of these dreams often varies, and they may even differ greatly. The composite force for historical progress will eventually shape these pursuits and dreams in quadrilaterals, but the social costs and price of defining this outline are highly uncertain. The Chinese dream integrates the diverse dreams, large or small, of different classes, groups and ethnicities into a common ideal and a shared vision; similarities are sought among differences and cherished, while differences are represented among similarities and protected so that the strength of 1.3 billion people can be rallied. As a Chinese saying puts it, “If brothers are united as one, they will become invincible”. As long as there is a consensus, unprecedented difficulties can be overcome, and ideals can be achieved.

– A dream arouses courage.

We pursue dreams because our reality is unsatisfactory; we must face and remold that reality to realize our dreams. In many cases, we may become helpless in the face of realistic conditions, not because we have no solutions for them but because we have no courage to change them, to the extent that we regard some conditions as dreams even though they should not be treated as such. For example, some may believe that purchasing a large number of houses by embezzling public funds or through other dishonest practices while holding public office is a shortcut to prosperity; some may consider something gained through change as a goal; and some may consider the “overcoat brother”, a farmer who became a singer overnight in a talent show, as a model for those at the grassroots level. In fact, the first practice is unjust and should not be part of the Chinese dream, and the questionable achievement of the “overcoat brother” is also not commensurate with the Chinese dream. These examples show that some hidden rules are very strong in reality, and some hypocritical practices have gained popularity. However, once a real Chinese dream is established, it is worth pursuing and its path is scientific, so we can be bold in challenging unfairness and injustice and destroying the illusion that there is such a thing as a free lunch.

1.2 Rich Connotations of the Chinese Dream

To advocate for and create the Chinese dream, it is necessary to describe the origin of that dream and the hope and vision it carries. A dream mirrors thought, pursuit and ambition. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is a millennial echo and centenary anticipation.

With a long and splendid history, the Chinese civilization was brilliant, powerful and prosperous in the Han Dynasty (B.C. 202–A.D. 220) and the Tang Dynasty

(A.D. 618–A.D. 907). According to scholars, China's economic scale was the largest in the world until the end of the 18th century and was equivalent to the proportion of the U.S. economy's place in the world's aggregate economy at the end of the 20th century. However, since the beginning of modern times, the Western powers have invaded China with powerful weapons; the Chinese nation has experienced untold suffering, made tremendous sacrifices, and lost resplendence and dignity; and the Chinese people have started to painstakingly seek the Chinese dream.

Therefore, in contemporary China, the dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is not only a heroic utterance but also crystal-clear in content—to make the country more powerful and prosperous, the people happier, and the nation better able to contribute to the world.

- If the country is not prosperous and strong, it will be humiliated and treated without proper respect; if there is no national rejuvenation, we are not qualified to be the descendants of the dragon (a metaphor for the Chinese nation). In regard to rejuvenation, we should not aim simply to recover our past glory; instead, we hope that China, a country that has been bullied by foreign powers and is currently developing, will develop economically, advance politically, prosper culturally and be socially harmonious in order to become a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized and harmonious modern Eastern socialist country by the middle of the 21st century.
- The people become rich only when the country is strong, so making the country strong is a way to enrich the people. If the people are not well off, development has not been successful; if the people are not happy, rejuvenation has not been achieved. Our reason for rejuvenation is not just to become strong and bring about development; instead, the aim is to provide the people with access to better education, more stable work, more satisfactory income, more reliable social security, better medical and health services, improved living conditions and a more beautiful environment; moreover, rejuvenation ensures that our children will have better conditions in which to grow, work and live. Furthermore, it enables the people to become the masters of their own country and to live better lives with more dignity, and it makes it possible for 1.3 billion Chinese people to develop freely in an all-around way.
- Rejuvenation is not just economic and political rejuvenation but also the rejuvenation of culture and civilization; it makes it possible for the Chinese nation—which has inherited a 5000-year-old civilization, shared its values with the world and used soft power to promote common worldwide prosperity—to stand firm among the nations of the world.

2 Basic Principles of the Chinese Dream

It is essential to interpret the Chinese dream and the principles behind it.

2.1 The “Popular Version” of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The Chinese dream depends on achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation at the primary stage of socialism, modernizing the developing country, pursuing common prosperity in a country with a population of more than 1.3 billion, and realizing the peaceful rise of this large country in a world dominated by Western powers. These achievements involve new ideas, experiments and practices that have never before been seen in China. In this sense, the Chinese dream is unprecedented in human society. As the Chinese dream is a new one, in order to ensure that rejuvenation does not lead to restoration of the old ways and that rise does not beget threat, socialism with Chinese characteristics must be adapted to define the connotation of the Chinese dream, shape its soul and exhibit its essence. Therefore, the Chinese dream and socialism with Chinese characteristics are the same cause expressed in different ways: the Chinese dream cannot be separated from socialism with Chinese characteristics because they are synonymous; the Chinese dream is a “popular version” of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

We often stress that Marxism should be practiced in a popular manner; socialism with Chinese characteristics should also be popularized. In parallel with retaining the spiritual substance and scientific value of socialism with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary to creatively convert it in the system of communication to provide contemporary Chinese society and the Chinese people with a visible goal for achieving and transcending as well as a scientific, inspiring and lofty ideal, making socialism with Chinese characteristics display more affinity with the people and become more concrete and clear. This is the historical mission that should be accomplished through the Chinese dream.

Some people reject the popularization of theories and even perceive popularization as a translation of classical theories into plain language; they believe that this approach is lowbrow and not a “major achievement” and are therefore unwilling to acknowledge the popularized theories. This is an unhealthy mentality—standing still, refusing to make progress, and being opinionated. This approach is wrong conceptually and harmful in practice.

The popularization of theories is not easy. Theoretical innovation is the first priority for popularization. Indeed, a “system” is a sign of theoretical completeness, but it is nothing but an expression in the theoretical field. To practice a theory, it must be available in a practical form; to popularize a theory, it must take a popular form. A popular theory should be concise and explicit; preferably, it should be based on “adages” or just a few words. Based on the history of China’s social development, “quotations” indicate that theories have the strongest vitality, are most productive and are most capable of playing a role. If there has been no profound theoretical accumulation or painstaking theoretical innovation, it is impossible to discover what excites the people and to turn those ideas into “quotations” and word of mouth to make them develop and undergo innovation along with more basic theories in the process of inheritance and preservation to maintain continuity while advancing with the times.

The popularization of theories is worthwhile and urgent. Without popularization, socialism with Chinese characteristics will be shelved. Socialism with Chinese characteristics cannot be converted into a tremendous material force unless it has been fully acquired by the people. Thanks to the Chinese dream, the theoretical achievements of socialism with Chinese characteristics are no longer locked in books, documents and meetings; they are inserted into people's lives and put into dynamic practice in China through being mastered and applied by the people in a popular line of thought in a concise and popular way. These theoretical innovations turn the Chinese dream into a thought weapon for the people and make the people its material weapon.

2.2 *The Historical Logic of the Chinese Dream*

At present, the people compare the American dream with the Chinese dream. The most direct manifestation of the American dream is the personal dream that it is possible for anyone within the territory of the USA to succeed through hard work. The former president Barack Obama is a good example of an interpretation of the American dream: An African American whose elder generation came from a country far from the USA can become the president of the most powerful country in the world, showing that everything is possible in that nation.

Unlike the American dream, the Chinese dream is primarily a dream of the Chinese nation and of the country and refers to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Why is the Chinese dream primarily a dream of the Chinese nation and of the country? The more than 170 years of history since the Opium War tell us that everyone's future and fate in Chinese society are closely related to the destiny of the nation and country. No one is well off unless the country and the Chinese nation are.

China was one of the most prosperous and wealthy countries in the world before the 19th century; however, if the country is not strong and the nation does not thrive, wealth, even if it has been created in large quantities, cannot be retained. The UK set a precedent by extorting reparations from China in 1842 through the *Treaty of Nanjing*. Afterwards, reparations soared in the *Treaty of Beijing*, the *Peace Protocol of 1901* and the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*. As of 1901, the external reparations paid by China had hit 1953 million silver dollars eight times and were 16 times the total national fiscal revenue of the Qing government. According to research conducted by scholars, if the currency exchange rates, heavy interest charges by foreign banks and plundered physical resources are considered, the wealth plundered from modern China by foreign invaders and colonists was no less than 100 billion silver dollars.¹ Furthermore, they looted and removed all the things that could be carried away and destroyed those that could not. The Old Summer

¹See the white paper *China's Human Rights*, November, (1991).

Palace, an architectural treasure integrating Chinese and Western art, was not immune to this miserable fate even though it was full of Western artistic elements; after British and French invaders robbed it of its art treasures, they set fire to it to cover up their crimes, and the fire, which lasted for three days and three nights, reduced this world-famous garden to a heap of rubble.

The Chinese people originally farmed and studied to raise families and stressed ritual and morality; however, as the country was not strong and the nation did not thrive, they were second-class citizens even in their homeland. In 1868, the first park was built within the British Concession in the Bund of Shanghai, but a sign reading “No Dogs or Chinese Allowed” was posted at its entrance. No matter how much some people misinterpreted the board or even denied its existence afterwards, the fact that the Chinese people could not freely enter or leave such places in their homeland cannot be forgotten. In 1937, the Japanese war of aggression against China broke out, and Chinese people’s lives were threatened. Thirty-five million Chinese people died or were injured in just eight years after the outbreak of that war. All of these unforgettable memories, which the Chinese people are reluctant to recall, are testimonies to the suffering resulting from the decline of the nation and the weakness of the country. As a Chinese saying goes, “a thing cannot exist without its foundation”. When the country and nation were bullied at will, a dream was an extravagant hope for any Chinese person.

In contrast, when the nation was revitalized and the country became strong, the world looked at China in a new way. After the Chinese people took a stand, the U.S. president Richard Nixon took the initiative to visit many parts of China, initiating cooperation between China and the USA, and the Chinese people took pride in what occurred afterwards. In more than 30 years following the late 1970s, socialism with Chinese characteristics advanced impressively, resulting in earthshaking economic, political and social changes in Chinese society. China’s economic aggregate has accounted for more than 10% of the global economy and has ranked No. 2 in the world. China’s international trade has made up more than 11% of global trade and has also ranked No. 2. Therefore, the world has more actively listened to China and even sought its advice. For ordinary Chinese people, the most obvious impression they obtain from overseas travel is that attendants at stores and hotels should speak Chinese because the world should communicate with the Chinese. Even the increasing criticism of China in the world reflects its might. During the global financial crisis that erupted in 2008, a professional foreign media spokesperson said that as China became stronger, people had higher expectations of it; when problems arose, people were more prone to criticize it, but this was just criticism. After all, foreign powers were no longer able to order China to do what they wanted; the days when the Eight-Nation Allied Forces invaded China had ended.

Therefore, the Chinese dream represents the long-cherished wish of several generations of the Chinese people, embodies the overall interest of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, and is the common aspiration of the Chinese people. Striving for the Chinese dream is the same as striving for the dreams of the people. When the Chinese dream has been realized, every Chinese person’s dreams will have come true. When the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been

achieved, the Chinese people will become happier, enjoy more dignity and be able to more freely develop in an all-around way. In this sense, fundamentally, the Chinese dream embodies the dreams of the people.

The dreams of people are, first, dreams regarding their own livelihood—the most immediate and realistic issues of interest to the people are accessible education, paid work, access to medical treatment as needed, old-age care, and available housing. Footage from a recent CCTV news broadcast impressed many people: A couple from an urban household receiving subsistence allowances were very happy when they received the key to their social security housing; looking at their smiles, the viewer did not need to ask whether they were happy. The realization of the dreams regarding the people's livelihood comes with the pursuit of the dream of dignity. It is essential to ensure that the people live not only a well-off, even affluent life but also a more decent life. Furthermore, fundamentally, the dreams of the people involve success. The Chinese dream and the American dream take different forms, but both aim to make people successful; the Chinese dream cannot be considered as not encouraging the people to succeed. General Secretary Xi Jinping especially stressed that we must ensure opportunities for all Chinese people to thrive, make their dreams come true, grow and advance with the motherland and the times. Of course, success cannot be taken for granted, and it is undesirable to act irrationally to achieve these so-called successes. Taking unjust advantage of power to illegally own a large number of houses is a practice that is unfit for the ordinary people, and such acts cannot be considered part of the people's dream of success. The grass-roots "overcoat brother" rose to fame by singing at a talent show by chance; such success is far from normal and should not be part of efforts to realize the people's dream of success. That dream must conform to the nature of the people to be achieved by them.

3 Global Significance of the Chinese Dream

The Chinese dream is shared by China and the world. It is necessary to explain the value of civilization and the global significance of the Chinese dream at the practical, theoretical and civilization level to better introduce China to the world and ensure that China is understood, recognized and respected by the world.

3.1 At a Practical Level, the Chinese Dream Is a Dream of Peace, Development, Cooperation and a Win-Win Outcome

China's population accounts for 20% of the world's population, and its people live a good life with 7.2% of the world's land. With an area equivalent to that of the

USA, China supports a population four times that of the USA. The Chinese dream—that the Chinese people can follow their own path, adopt their own system, and live and work in their own way in peace and contentment as well as achieve happiness and success—is China’s greatest contribution to the world.

However, this is only a small aspect of the global significance of the Chinese dream. The Chinese dream is not confined to addressing, China itself; instead, it benefits the world by developing China. The way that China has developed socially over more than 60 years clearly shows that the Chinese dream is a dream of peace, development, cooperation and a win-win outcome.

- Peace and development are the themes of the time and represent the road to pursuing the Chinese dream.

We pursue the independent foreign policy of peace, adhere to the path of peaceful development and uphold the opening-up strategy of mutually beneficial cooperation. We oppose hegemony and power politics, maintain world peace, promote the common development of mankind, and strive to help build a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity. These values are enshrined in the *Constitution of the Communist Party of China*. We unswervingly take the path towards peaceful development and are dedicated to safeguarding worldwide peace and actively promoting the common development and prosperity of various countries while persevering in our own peaceful development. These goals were announced in the white paper *China’s Peaceful Development*. This is the line of thought and action in Chinese society.

As nuclear weapons cast a shadow over the world, China is the only nuclear power that has openly undertaken to not be the first to use nuclear weapons and to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and territories. In recent years, on major international and regional hot-spot issues, China has persisted in promoting talks and has advocated peace, development and cooperation rather than wars, poverty and confrontations. China has actively participated in peacekeeping operations and has sent approximately 21,000 person-times to 30 peacekeeping operations carried out by the United Nations. China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which has sent the largest number of peacekeepers. China has worked with the international community to actively address terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, food and energy security, major natural disasters and other global challenges. In this regard, China has joined more than 100 international inter-governmental organizations and has signed more than 300 international conventions.

- Cooperation and a win-win outcome are the trend of the times and the conscious choice of the Chinese dream.

The zero-sum game is a classic model in international relations, but it is an exception in a static closed system. With scientific and technological progress and expanded concepts of civilization, the contemporary world has increasingly become a large, open and dynamic system. In this system, $1 + 1$ is more than 2, and the positive-sum game has become normal and increasingly prominent. With the new

perspective of a community with a common destiny and the new philosophy of joint advancement and win-win cooperation, China's sustained and rapid development is attributable to global prosperity and development, and China's development provides golden opportunities and a broad space for the countries of the world to seek common development.

Since its accession to the WTO in 2001, China has annually imported goods worth an average of 687 billion USD and has created more than 14 million jobs for relevant countries and territories; China's trade with the neighboring countries has soared from more than 100 billion USD to 1.3 trillion USD; and China has become the largest trading partner, the largest export market and an important investment source for many neighboring countries. Given this developmental trend, from 2013 to 2018, China will import goods worth approximately 10 trillion USD, its investments in foreign countries will reach 500 billion USD and outbound tourism may exceed 400 million person-times. According to a research report from Goldman Sachs, China's contribution to global economic growth surpassed 20% in the ten years from 2000 to 2009, higher than that of the USA and 3 times that of the Eurozone. After the global financial crisis and sovereign debt crisis in Europe occurred in 2009, China joined with the international community to overcome these difficulties, thus making important contributions to the stability and recovery of the world's economy; its contribution to global economic growth exceeded 50% in 2009. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highly commended China for these contributions. According to a 2010 report, when China's economy grew by 1%, the economy in middle-income and low-income countries grew by 0.34 and 0.2%, respectively.

China's win-win cooperation with the world covers small and large countries, both neighbors and allies far away. As China attaches importance to developing and improving its relations with the developed countries, expands its fields of cooperation, properly addresses differences and establishes a new type of relationship with great powers for long-term stable and healthy development, it emphasizes building and consolidating friendly relationships and partnerships with its neighbors, deepening mutually beneficial cooperation and striving to make its own development benefit its neighboring countries. While adding luster to the world's economy, China doesn't forget to provide opportune help to developing countries. In recent years, it has forgiven due debts worth nearly 30 billion RMB for 50 heavily indebted poor and least-developed countries and has undertaken to provide zero-tariff treatment for products involving 97% of taxable items to the least-developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China. The current world pattern has a historical imprint with many defects and drawbacks concerning fairness and justice as well as balanced universality, but China actively participates in, builds and contributes to the international system. China observes, in good faith, the basic international rules and determines its stands and policies according to the rights and wrongs of promoting the development of international order and the international system in a just and rational way.

3.2 At the Theoretical Level: the Chinese Dream Shares Similarities with the Dreams of People from Countries Around the World, Including the American Dream

Since the Chinese dream was presented, Chinese society and the international community have wrestled with two different perspectives—some people attempt to incorporate the Chinese dream into the American dream under the pretext of a universal value and use the American dream to explain the Chinese dream; others, based on ideological considerations, spare no effort to suggest that the Chinese dream is completely incompatible with the American dream. Given the stands and value judgments on which these views are based, both are plausible, but the extreme and overly correct attitudes are not constructive for the USA or the world and may cause trouble for no reason.

Great wisdom is required to escape this trap. The Chinese dream contains exactly such wisdom.

More than forty years ago, a handshake across the Pacific Ocean occurred between China and the U.S.; Chairman Mao and President Richard Nixon held conversations about philosophy in Chairman Mao's study. This changed the outlook of the world and the world itself; after the Sino-US talks, the bilateral relationship and the world pattern took on a new look.

More than forty years later, a new round of cooperation across the Pacific Ocean was initiated between both countries. President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping met at the Annenberg Estate; during the meeting, President Xi Jinping said that the Chinese dream shared similarities with the dreams of people from countries around the world, including the American dream. Thus, the world has gained a new understanding, at a philosophical level, of the openness and inclusiveness of the Chinese dream.

– Similarities signify the objective existence of differences.

The Chinese dream is different from the American dream, and the differences are apparent and profound. The most direct manifestation of the American dream is the personal dream, which means that it is possible for anyone within the USA to succeed through hard work. The Chinese dream is first a dream of the nation and of the country and refers to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Everyone's future and fate in Chinese society has been closely related to the destiny of the nation and country. Everyone is not well off unless the country and the Chinese nation are.

The differences between the Chinese dream and the American dream should not be deliberately exaggerated, but it is unnecessary and wrong to cover up these differences because they result from the inevitable differences in historical facts, in the orientation towards development, and in national conditions and goals.

China is a country with an ancient civilization and a splendid oriental culture that is several thousand years old; it is also a developing country that upholds Marxist theory and follows the socialist road. The USA is an emerging developed capitalist

country made up of immigrants and highly influenced by Western civilization. These differing histories, national conditions and values result in the fact that the Chinese dream and the American dream have distinct characteristics and connotations.

If the two dreams were exactly alike, it would be a nightmare for both China and the USA and even for the world. Let us take energy consumption as an example: The per capita annual consumption of crude oil in the USA is 22 barrels, while that figure is 2 in China. What would the world look like if energy consumption was the same in China and the USA?

- It is necessary to share similarities because of differences, and it is possible to share similarities because of differences.

Of course, different forms of the dream may lead to misunderstandings. For example, people in US society do not understand and are hostile to China because they have not learned about China's choice of social system and insistence on ideology; they also adopt skeptical wait-and-see attitudes towards, or even show fear of, China's path towards peaceful development. In fact, the so-called "China threat theory" was developed because of the impact of these attitudes. Likewise, many ordinary people in Chinese society have a prejudice against and doubts about American freedom, democracy, rule of law and human rights to some extent; they have a strong aversion to the American values promoted by the United States around the world. Given such mutual misunderstanding, a spate of contradictions, frictions and conflicts is unavoidable between China and the USA and is reflected in economic and trade exchanges and in even fields such as networking and cultural communications.

However, as a Chinese saying goes, "harmony generates things, while sameness cannot sustain development". It is necessary to share similarities because of differences; it is possible to share similarities because of differences; our world is wonderful partly because of differences. The new type of relationship between great powers to which both countries have recently paid attention must be addressed by starting with small things in a pragmatic way; however, it is more necessary to take a wider view and aim high. President Xi Jinping once quoted a saying from one of eight great men of letters of the Tang and Song Dynasties: The finer details fall into place when they align with the bigger picture, which is of referential significance for both of these two great powers in building a new type of relationship. If excessive attention is paid to the different forms of the two countries and minor details, this new type of relationship cannot be established.

- There are common pursuits behind different forms.

The two countries share the same earth, though the distance between them is great. The people in both countries are part of mankind, though they are greatly different. There is a shared foundation behind these great differences. Moreover, differences appear only when similarities serve as a reference; thus, the differences are known only because similarities have been known. This is the logic and charm of philosophy. What are the similarities between the Chinese dream and the American dream?

The Chinese dream and the American dream share the same aspiration of pursuing success and happiness. Both dreams are common in their belief in achieving success through means that conform to the nature of the dream and display their own advantages. Similarities are not designed to eliminate differences and bring about sameness. The real similarities must be reflected and realized by the differences.

American society is full of self-confidence and self-conceit regarding its freedom and equality. In fact, we are proud of the Chinese dream for also pursuing freedom and equality. According to Karl Marx, the spiritual mentor for the people of the Communist Party of China, the most distinctive characteristic of our ideal society is that every individual's free development is the prerequisite for the free development of all human beings, which is a higher level of freedom. The Chinese dream ensures that the people become the master of their own country, which means an unprecedented equality.

Therefore, China and the USA are making active contributions to human civilization and progress in their own ways. Being aligned with the socialist market economy, socialist legal norms and the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, the Chinese dream—which is supported by socialist core values and is realized by taking China's path, carrying forward China's spirit and rallying China's strength—provides human society with a path that features peace, development and win-win cooperation, and makes the world better. Likewise, the American dream—which is supported by the philosophies upheld in American society, such as freedom, democracy, equality and competition—gives birth to a social developmental mode that is vibrant and innovative, impresses the world and leads the trend of world development.

Meeting in harmony and delivering a win-win outcome as a result of similarities represents a change in philosophical outlook and the beginning of a change in the world. A completely new and beautiful world is emerging from the similarities between the Chinese dream and the dreams of people from countries around the world, including the American dream.

3.3 At the Level of Civilization: Different Civilizations Produce Different Behavioral Patterns and Different Value Evaluations

Realizing a rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of contemporary China; however, rejuvenation does not mean restoration of the old ways and the glory of the past feudal empire, which is meaningless and no longer possible. The greatest contribution made by the Chinese nation to the world in the past was the dissemination of civilization and the promotion of culture rather than merely economic prosperity and great national strength. It is necessary for contemporary China to make new contributions to the world as a legacy of its civilization,

prosperity and innovation. Therefore, most fundamentally, the rejuvenation to strive for is the rejuvenation of civilization; fundamentally, the Chinese dream is the dream of civilization and is aimed at contributing more to progress in the civilization of the world.

The core of a civilization is the philosophy of value and the pattern of thinking and behavior led by that philosophy. The philosophy of value—harmony—that comes with the long-standing Chinese civilization and has been renewed in the current time, especially the harmony between people and nature, among people, between the body and the mind and similar patterns of thought and behavior, adds the color of civilization to the Chinese dream and presents a new landscape of civilization to improve the world.

- The Chinese dream consists of exploring a new path of civilization for harmonious development between people and nature.

At one time, the Chinese people endured pain to regard the use of powerful weapons by foreign powers to destroy the pastoral life, including in Chinese society, as progress. Over nearly four hundred years, Western industrial civilization has greatly enriched the materials of production and fostered economic prosperity in a way that is unprecedented in human society. However, as social resources have been depleted and environmental deterioration and ecological degradation have loomed large, the predatory acts of opposing and exhausting nature in industrial civilizations have come to an end, the death knell has been tolled, and human beings must experience the sufferings caused by those acts. Human society must develop, but such development cannot proceed with measures of temporary relief that would result in disaster. After all, we have only one earth. Against this background, as an important connotation of the Chinese dream, the socialist ecological civilization combines the thoughts of Chinese civilization regarding the unity and harmonious coexistence of people and nature with Western civilization and creatively converts these ideas to define a new path for sustainable development of human society and to make it possible to rehabilitate the overburdened earth. China pushes ahead with industrialization and urbanization in a steadfast, earnest and unflinching way, but its new type of industrialization and urbanization is carried out against the background of a socialist ecological civilization and neither wastes resources nor pollutes the environment.

- The Chinese dream offers a civilizational paradigm for peaceful coexistence and development of different races and different countries.

In recent years, Western society, including that of the USA, has been concerned about the threat posed by a powerful China to the world. Such concern stems from the understanding and conceptualization of the development of human society within the paradigm of Western civilization. Indeed, when Columbus discovered the new world, he first planted the empire's flag and announced its occupation in the name of the queen of Spain. After the steam engine came into being in the UK, the UK's response was to plan to expand its overseas colonies. However, when

Zheng He, a famous Chinese navigator in a period slightly before that of Columbus, traveled to the west seven times, three more times than Columbus did, he sowed the seeds of peace at the places he visited and conveyed the generosity of a large country. Present conduct can be understood by reviewing history. The powerful China of the past never coveted other countries, so it is impossible for the reviving China to threaten the world. Different civilizations give rise to different behavioral patterns and different values evaluations. The new type of relationship among great powers is meaningful and possible because the Chinese dream, based on the splendid 5000-year-old Chinese civilization, provides a new outlook on the world for China and the USA based on peace, development and win-win cooperation. Therefore, once China is well off, the world is well off. This is not merely diplomatic parlance; instead, it is the developmental path and strategy based on the civilizational endowment of the Chinese dream. Furthermore, as the technologies of war advance in human society and conflicts may cause great destruction, the harmonious world advocated by the Chinese dream is a valuable philosophy for civilization.

- The harmony between mind and matter and between body and mind, as pursued by the Chinese dream, provides guidance for understanding ourselves and achieving happiness.

Western society started the journey of civilization by conquering the outside world; as a result, confusion increased with distance and there was more emptiness as more lands were conquered. Thus, reason failed to tame appetite, and interest could not contain greed. In particular, in modern society, anxiety, depression and a one-dimensional perspective have become long-standing diseases of civilization. Indeed, any person's greatest enemy is the person himself or herself rather than nature or other people. It is necessary to undergo self-examination, cultivate the moral character, realize the true essence of life, discover the meaning of life, break away from the binary opposition between mind and matter and body and mind, and not let matter enslave the mind to bring peace to the world and to ourselves. Thus, Chinese civilization is requisite for a healthy modern society.

The Chinese dream can make this ideal come true because the revival of civilization is unrelated to self-admiration, and prosperity is achieved amidst interaction among civilizations. At the intersection between eastern and western civilizations, the Chinese dream is based on Chinese civilization and also draws upon much wisdom and many achievements from western civilization. The 5000-year-old Chinese civilization is the root of civilization for the Chinese dream, while Marxism over the past 170 years is the source of faith for the Chinese dream, and the world's developmental achievements since the Second World War serve as a valuable reference for the dream.

In a recent international academic forum, the author said that Chinese society was thankful for Western civilization since Western civilization offered it “-isms” and experience. The Western scholars in the audience were surprised and smiled. Indeed, the Chinese dream is open to the world, and the world should also be open

to the Chinese dream. President Xi Jinping said that the vast Pacific Ocean had enough space to accommodate China and the USA. If the bias of traditional Western civilization is removed, it will be found that our horizons and minds are much broader than the Pacific Ocean.

Therefore, the logic of civilization within the Chinese dream shows the world that the free development of each country and nation is a prerequisite for the free development of all countries and nations. History has no end, and human society should not explore only one path because a number of new paths must be carved out. Mankind never has only one value. The contention among and coexistence of diverse values are the essential scenario for human society.

3.4 Routes for Realizing the Chinese Dream

To make the Chinese dream become reality, it is essential to explain the dream, the reasons behind it, and the routes and strategic requirements for realizing it. As General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed in concluding the first session of the 12th National People's Congress, we must take China's path, carry forward China's spirit and rally China's strength.

- All roads lead to Rome, but the road to Rome certainly does not lead to Shangri-La. Because dreams are different, the roads to realizing them are different. The path to realizing the Chinese dream is China's path.

A great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires great spatial and temporal reduction and transcendence. We must take several decades to finish the course that modern Western society experienced for several hundred years. Thus, China's path must be a path towards catching up with and surpassing the Western world and should involve concentrating resources to accomplish large undertakings. Owing to the internal mechanisms and operational mode of China's path, it can develop a strong will for uniting and a powerful force for organizing so that all economic, political and social resources can be mobilized nationwide and the people can become united to forge ahead together and focus on overcoming great difficulties and can rapidly and efficiently respond to emergencies and complete tasks. This path is developed by the people themselves. With pioneering efforts over more than 90 years, explorations for more than 60 years and practice for more than 30 years, we navigated a tough and winding course, experienced ups and downs and surmounted great difficulties. This rich experience gives us a clear idea of the path. Moreover, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that China's path is the result of the profound developmental course of the Chinese nation over more than 170 years since the beginning of modern times; China's path was developed by the Chinese nation's inheritance of the 5000-year-old civilization. The long history of China's path is expounded at the historical and civilizational levels as the path is traced back over 5000 years. This is of great significance.

- Dreams are different, so the spirit and value support behind them are also different. The national spirit with patriotism as the core and the spirit of the time with reform and innovation as the core together are the soul of the Chinese dream, bringing the people together to revive the country and make it powerful.

In its 5000-year-long developmental course, despite being invaded and bullied and suffering setbacks, the Chinese nation has staunchly achieved brilliant successes. Fundamentally, these are attributable to the patriotism that resulted in the strong will and solidarity of the nation. The Chinese dream supported by patriotism integrates the country, the nation, families and individuals into a whole and combines personal struggles and development with the struggles and development of the people as a whole and of the entire Chinese nation; it gives full play to the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the people and makes them the masters of the country, fostering their own development and building their own society. Reform and innovation always make up the spiritual strength that spurs us to advance with the times in the process of reform and opening up. The Chinese dream means that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is achieved at the primary stage of socialism and a developing country is modernized, common prosperity is realized across a population of 1.3 billion or more, and the peaceful rise of a large Eastern country is achieved in a world pattern dominated by Western powers. All these new experiments and practices have not occurred in the past. Therefore, we cannot be content with the normal ways and cannot follow the beaten track; we must explore new routes with a spirit of innovation, acquire new experience, take new measures, and blaze new trails to realize new dreams.

- The Chinese dream follows a great course and is an ambitious blueprint. This course and blueprint must be guaranteed by forces of power.

As China follows the path of a socialist market economy, different interest groups and social classes naturally arise in the social structure. These classes and groups differ in awareness, values, behavioral patterns and the interests to which they appeal. Undoubtedly, differences and diversity mark development and progress in a modern society; however, the course along which Chinese society pursued dreams for one hundred years shows that a great cause cannot be accomplished and a vision cannot be achieved in a state of disunity.

To rally strength, it is necessary to build consensus, and the foundation for building consensus is the integration of society. The expectation that the entire world shares one dream is extraordinarily wonderful, but it is just an expectation. In reality, the whole world cannot share one dream because the dream cannot be the same if the same conditions do not exist.

When the people who are the first to become rich in a society focus on consolidating their wealth through the next generation(s) and the people with power shape their succeeding generation(s) through tailor-made recruitment and directed promotion, when the children of ordinary families cannot afford to enjoy a cup of coffee after struggling for 8–10 years and even farmers' children do not prepare to attend universities or remain rural migrant workers in cities after graduating from

universities, it is unlikely that these people will treat each other as equals. When a cat meets a mouse, the cat is bound to eat the mouse. When a mouse sees a cat, the mouse tries to escape. Under the life-or-death survival mode, the people cannot share one dream.

Of course, the same life absolutely does not mean that everyone wears the same clothes, lives in the same houses, and eats the same foods. Absolute egalitarianism is unrealistic and not theoretically rational. The same life to which we refer means the same in political rights and personal dignity. We may fall into different classes and different groups in social and economic operations, but in terms of political rights, we have only one identity—citizen, and we have only one name—mankind—in nature and the universe. Society should allow differentiation and differences but not repulsion and alienation.

In the past, vitality and motivational power were cultivated in Chinese society by differentiating social groups and making a distinction among you, them and us. In the future, social groups should be integrated and you, they and we should be regrouped into an integrated whole in Chinese society to produce joint and centripetal forces.

If brothers are united as one, they will become invincible. Once a consensus exists, including sharing and common prosperity, any difficulty can be overcome, and any dream can be realized. The Chinese dream can be shared by all.

3.5 Practical Requirements for the Chinese Dream

A dream, no matter how wonderful, is only a dream until it is realized. The realization of a dream relies on doing instead of talking. Comrade Deng Xiaoping said that if no action was taken, Marxism would hardly be practiced. Likewise, if no action is taken, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will be nothing but a dream. Empty talk will lead the country astray, while solid work can rejuvenate it. To realize the dream, we should adopt a down-to-earth attitude to overcome difficulties and lay a solid foundation to make the Chinese dream come true.

– Be realistic and pragmatic.

China is still at the primary stage of socialism and will be at this stage for a long time; this basic national condition has not changed. The principal social contradiction between the increasing material and cultural needs of the people and backward social production has not changed. China's international status as the largest developing country in the world has not changed. This situation requires us to fundamentally proceed from the reality that China is at the primary stage of socialism and not aim too high or underestimate our own capabilities. We should not be timid and overcautious or impetuous; we should adopt concrete policies and encourage and carry out solid work. As mentioned by General Secretary Xi Jinping, we should work diligently morning and night; resolutely curb formalism, which

features ostentation and does not take into account actual effects, efficiency, speed, quality and costs; and uncompromisingly eliminate empty talk, bragging and lies.

– Be future-oriented and down-to-earth.

Some people joke that Marxists turn socialism from fantasy into science, and now we are turning socialism from reality into a dream. This joke is absurd and wrong because it misinterprets and misunderstands the practical foundation and reality of the Chinese dream, but it is not completely meaningless; it admonishes us that if we cannot scientifically deal with the relationship between the future-oriented nature of the Chinese dream and its focus on today's reality, the Chinese dream is just a dream. In fact, the Chinese dream has two time coordinates. Being future-oriented, it carries all of our hopes and pursuits. Full democracy, rule of law, sacred rights, a prosperous country and strong and freely developing people are necessary aspects of the Chinese dream. The roads to realizing the Chinese dream have no end. Focusing on today's reality, the Chinese dream requires that all of our institutional arrangements and policy guidelines should strengthen justice, eliminate evil, and favor the good instead of the bad; we should achieve the goals of each stage to gradually build a new society, and we should take concrete actions to show that the starting point of the Chinese dream is near at hand. Combining the two time coordinates means that we should act in a down-to-earth manner while pursuing our ideals, and we should pay attention to our direction while carrying out practical work rather than muddle along and achieve immediate goals at the expense of further development.

– Be brave in overcoming difficulties.

The Chinese dream cannot be realized easily and overnight. As mentioned in the *Report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, we must prepare for many great struggles with new historical characteristics. In this process, we may meet with huge resistance and enormous pressure and may need to wade through deep water, cross land mines, and even experience another revolution; the behavioral patterns to which we have become accustomed will no longer work. We may be required to surrender the interests that have put money into our pockets. However, as suggested by Premier Li Keqiang, changing interests is more difficult than going deep into the soul. If you cut off the channels that someone uses to seek illegal gains, you will encounter resistance; he or she will obstruct you in hidden ways so that you will be strained and overwhelmed, and he or she may even control public opinion and wield improper influence in the society. Thus, we should act with great political courage and wisdom, political consciousness and deep political feeling to change these interests and go deep into the soul to fundamentally reform the irrational pattern of interests that restricts the realization of the Chinese dream and put an end to the irregular conduct that prevents the Chinese dream from being realized.

Chapter 2

Strategic Goal: Building a Well-off Society in an All-around Way

What is a well-off society?

On November 15, 2012, Xi Jinping, the newly elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, explained this strategic goal in the minds of the Chinese people in plain language: “There will be better education, more stable work, more satisfactory incomes, more reliable social security, a higher level of medical and health services, more comfortable living conditions, a more beautiful environment”, and “children can grow, work and live in a better way.” This remark painted a vivid and popular picture of a well-off society at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

1 The Theoretical Origin of a Well-off Society

A well-off society is the primary stage of an ideal society, corresponding to a society with great harmony—the highest stage of an ideal society—described in an ancient Chinese classic titled *Selected Works of Rites—Operation of Rites*. Given the basic national condition, in which China is still at the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time to come, Deng Xiaoping incorporated a creative conversion of Marxism into the concept of a well-off society, associated it with the scientific connotation of Marxism and proposed it as the goal for the modernization and development of Chinese society.

1.1 Deng Xiaoping Proposed a Well-off Society

We originally envisioned that four stages of modernization would be achieved by the end of the 20th century. This was an inspiring goal. However, based on a comparison with the levels of modernization of countries around the world, Deng

Xiaoping believed that by the end of the 20th century, China would only reach the level of the developed countries in the 1970s. He named this level of China's modernization by the end of the 20th century "Chinese-style modernization". In March 1979, he introduced this concept as a vitally important issue. In December 1979, he added that Chinese-style modernization meant a well-off family. Then we shall have a society in which people lead a fairly comfortable life. Realizing this society is what we call Chinese-style modernization. Quadrupling production, attaining a fairly comfortable level of life and Chinese-style modernization are all new concepts we have formed.¹

Deng Xiaoping combined the building of a well-off society with the strategic conception of three-step development. He said: "Our goal for the first step is to reach, by 1990, a per capita GNP of US \$500, that is, double the 1980 figure of \$250. The goal for the second step is, by the turn of the century, to reach a per capita GNP of \$1000. When we reach that goal, China will have shaken off poverty and achieved comparative prosperity."² The well-off society envisioned by Comrade Deng Xiaoping is an economically developed, politically democratic, socially stable, culturally and ideologically advanced, and environmentally beautiful society with overall coordinated economic, political and cultural development and a high level of comprehensive national strength. Such a well-off society, in which the people live and work in peace and contentment, involves a stage of social development in which the Chinese nation moves towards a new rejuvenation that embodies comfortable lives for the people and a country that is relatively powerful in terms of national strength.

By the end of the 20th century, we doubled the per capita GDP and completed the first two steps. Building a well-off society in an all-around way naturally became the third step of the strategic conception for achieving our ambitions by holding high the banner of the Deng Xiaoping Theory in the 21st century.

We should note that "building a well-off society in an all-around way" and "speeding up socialist modernization" are stated in parallel in the standard text prepared by the central leadership. Achieving modernization is a long-cherished social ideal pursued by the Chinese people; however, as China's national conditions and developmental path differ from those of the West, China cannot copy Western-style modernization. The concept of a well-off society is China's modernization strategy, developed by the members of the Communist Party of China, represented by Deng Xiaoping, by referring to the status of Western modernization and considering China's actual situation. It was summarized during the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China as follows: "Our future goal is that the GDP will double in the first ten years compared with that of the year 2000 so that people's lives will become more well off nationwide and a full-fledged socialist market economy will take shape; with more efforts for another ten years, the national economy will be more developed and institutions will be further

¹Deng (1993, p. 54).

²Ibid, p. 226.

enhanced at the centenary of the Communist Party of China; China's modernization will have basically been achieved and China will become a prosperous and civilized country by the middle of the 21st century—the centenary of the new China.”

Chinese-style modernization has its own specific connotations, which feature economic prosperity, a high degree of political democracy and high cultural and ideological levels. Upholding socialism and realizing common prosperity are necessary and are the top priorities of China's modernization program. “If we do not persist in socialism, China's well-off society cannot be formed”.³ “Our socialist system is based on public ownership and is designed to achieve common prosperity, a level at which a well-off society in our mind comes into being; this is a society in which the people's lives are generally improved.”⁴ In building a well-off society in an all-around way, these goals are integrated to develop a broad road towards modernization.

1.2 New Positioning of the Stage of Social Development to Progress Towards the Next-highest Level

What is the stage of social development for building a well-off society in an all-around way? What is the relationship between this stage and the primary stage of socialism, and what is its significance?

First, building a well-off society in an all-around way marks our extrication from poverty and the phase of seeking sufficient food and clothing as well as our march towards affluence; it marks a major breakthrough in our cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Generally, a comfortable life is evaluated based on the following two criteria: the structure of consumption (Engel's coefficient)—when the expenditure for food accounts for less than 50% of the total consumption expenditure—and per capita GDP exceeding 800 USD.

With the painstaking efforts of the Communist Party of China and people of all nationalities across China for more than 20 years, China's ambitious goal of quadrupling the per capita GDP of the year 1980 was realized three years in advance, in 1997; from 1980 to 1999, the growth rate of China's economic aggregate was much higher than the international level, and the annual average GDP growth rate was 9.8%. According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, by the end of 2000, China's GDP surpassed one trillion USD, and China's per capita GDP exceeded 800 USD. The lives of the people had surpassed the stage of seeking sufficient food and clothing, and Engel's coefficient for urban and rural residents had decreased by approximately 40 and 50%, respectively; this marked the entry of China into a well-off society and the realization of the first two steps of the three-step strategic goal for modernization. This was a fruitful achievement in

³Ibid, p. 64.

⁴Ibid, p. 216.

reform, opening up and modernization and a new milestone in the history of the development of the Chinese nation. Therefore, the previous announcement that China would basically enter a well-off society after these achievements occurred was well founded. Thus, China's development in the 21st century unfolded from a new starting point. This new starting point did not come easily, but it is of great significance. It involved the judgment and evaluation of the more than 20 years of China's achievements in reform and opening up. Therefore, the stage of building a well-off society in an all-around way should be understood as the crucial stage for us to further develop a society that is even more well off and even to achieve basic modernization after Chinese society has substantially become well off.

Second, building a well-off society in an all-around way does not overstep the long primary stage of socialism, but it is a concrete process during that stage. Although China has basically become a well-off society, the levels of its economic and cultural development are not high, and its per capita GDP is similar to that of countries at medium and low levels of development. China is still in the primary stage of socialism.

According to the theory of social development, development proceeds in a staged manner and stages cannot be surmounted by being taken for granted. The particular developmental level of the productive forces, the production relations and the superstructure determine that development is staged.

On the one hand, the productive social forces in contemporary China are still underdeveloped. China is at most in the middle of industrialization, and its urbanization has just begun, while the development of an information system has only been initiated. Therefore, both the structure and the growth pattern of industries are obviously characterized by the underdevelopment of the productive forces; for example, China's industry is still dominated by the manufacture of general equipment and labor-intensive development with an insufficient capability for independent innovation, and it is still low in industrial structure. Growth is still based mainly on high investments, high consumption and heavy pollution. In recent years, high pressure to finish tasks related to energy conservation and emissions reduction was applied by interest groups representing local regions. However, more importantly, that pressure resulted from the low level of the productive forces in terms of resource conservation and environmentally friendly practices. All these issues send a warning that we cannot mistakenly believe that leapfrog development and breakthroughs in China's productive forces have resulted from the tremendous achievements in economic development during a period of more than 30 years.

On the other hand, the productive social forces are fundamental, but merely paying attention to them is not enough; the productive relationship and superstructure exert a huge reverse impact on the productive forces. In the primary stage, it is necessary not only to understand the underdevelopment of the productive forces but also to be aware that the socialist system is not perfect and is not fully mature. In the primary stage of socialism, China's current system is indeed underdeveloped and unsophisticated. It is not shameful to recognize this; on the contrary, failure to recognize it is harmful because it makes the system not responsible for China's social development. Regarding social life, our institutions

are underdeveloped and immature to the extent that some institutions lack standardization, supporting institutions and coordination. For example, there is a lack of coordination among the institutions related to development and those related to equality. Institutional change and improvement is a gradual process. In the early 1990s, Deng Xiaoping noted that it might take another 30 years for China to develop more full-fledged and sound systems to improve various aspects of society.

2 Evolution of the Connotation of a Well-off Society

There is a deepening understanding of the specific requirements for a well-off society and its connotations in Chinese society. New requirements to achieve the goal of building a well-off society in an all-around way were proposed during the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and reiterated at the subsequent 17th National Congress and 18th National Congress.

The goals for building a well-off society in an all-around way, as identified during the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, are as follows:

- Based on optimizing the structure and improving performance, by 2020, the GDP of the year 2000 will quadruple, and comprehensive national strength and international competitiveness will have significantly improved. Industrialization will have been basically achieved, and a full-fledged socialist market economic system that is more flexible and open will have been built. The proportion of the population that is urban will have substantially increased; the trend of increasing differences between industry and agriculture, between urban and rural areas and among regions will be gradually reversing. The social security system will have become relatively sound; social employment will be relatively complete; the ownership of family property will generally be on the rise and people will enjoy a better standard of living.
- The system of socialist democracy will improve further; the socialist legal system will be more complete; the basic strategy of governing the country under the rule of law will be comprehensively carried out; and the people's political, economic and cultural rights and interests will be faithfully respected and guaranteed. Democracy at the grassroots level will be further enhanced; the social order will improve, and people will live and work in peace and contentment.
- The quality of ideology, ethics, science, culture and health will significantly improve for the entire Chinese nation. A relatively perfect modern national education system; a scientific, technological and cultural innovation system; a national fitness program; and a medical and health system will take shape. People will enjoy the opportunity to receive a good education. High school education will basically be popularized, and illiteracy will be eliminated. Society will support learning for the entire population, and there will be a lifelong learning program to promote the all-around development of the people.

- The capability for sustainable development will continuously improve, the ecological conservation of the environment will also improve, and the efficiency of the utilization of resources will be remarkably enhanced to promote harmony between people and nature and to ensure that the whole society will embark on a journey towards civilized development through the development of production, an affluent life and ecological conservation.

The goals for building a well-off society were expanded in the following five aspects at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party:

- The coordination of development will be enhanced to achieve sound and fast economic development. Major breakthroughs will transform the pattern of development. Based on optimizing structures, improving performance, reducing consumption and protecting the environment, the per capita GDP of the year 2000 will quadruple by 2020. The socialist market economic system will be closer to perfect. The capability for independent innovation will significantly improve. The rate of scientific and technological contributions to the progress of economic growth will markedly increase, making China an innovation-oriented country. The residents' consumption rate will steadily rise, and so will the pattern of coordinated growth fueled by consumption, investments and exports. The mechanisms of coordinated and interactive development between urban and rural areas and among regions and the layout of the main functional areas will take shape. Major progress will be made in the construction of the new socialist countryside. The proportion of the population that is urban will increase noticeably.
- The system of socialist democracy will be expanded to better guarantee the people's rights and interests, social equality and justice. Citizens' political participation will increase in an orderly manner. The basic strategy of governing the country under the rule of law will be carried out in-depth. The entire society's awareness of laws will be enhanced. New progress will be made in reconstructing the government under the rule of law. The grassroots democratic system will be further improved. The government's capability to provide basic public services will be significantly enhanced.
- Cultural construction will be intensified to visibly improve the quality of civilization of the entire Chinese nation. The socialist core values system will be deeply rooted among the people. Beneficial ideological and moral customs will be encouraged. The system of public cultural services covering the entire society will basically take shape. The proportion of the cultural industry in the national economy will increase noticeably. International competitiveness will be enhanced. The cultural products suited to the people's needs will become more diversified.
- The development of social undertakings will be accelerated to comprehensively improve the lives of the people. The modern national education system will improve. A lifelong education system will take shape. The education of the entire population and the cultivation of innovative talents will be significantly

boosted. Social employment will increase. The social security system covering both urban and rural residents will basically be established. Everyone will enjoy a basic security of life. A rational and orderly pattern of income distribution will be formed. The middle-income groups will make up the majority. Absolute poverty will essentially be eradicated. Everyone will have access to basic medical and health services. The system of social management will further improve.

- An ecologically aware civilization will be fostered. The patterns of industrial structure, growth and consumption characterized by the conservation of energy and resources and protection of the environment will basically take shape. The recycling economy will expand. The proportion of available energy based on renewable resources will significantly increase. The emissions of the main pollutants will be effectively controlled. The quality of the environment will visibly improve. Ecological awareness will be firmly developed in the whole society.

These goals were further enriched at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China as follows:

- The economy will develop in a sustainable and healthy way. Much progress will be made in transforming the manner of economic development. Based on improving the developmental balance, coordination and sustainability, the GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents in the year 2010 will double. The rate of scientific and technological contributions to progress towards economic growth will markedly rise, making China an innovation-oriented country. Industrialization will basically be achieved. The level of information dissemination will substantially increase. The quality of urbanization will significantly improve. Notable effects will be produced in the modernization of agriculture and the construction of the new socialist countryside. The mechanism of coordinated regional development will basically be formed. China will be more open to the outside world, and its international competitiveness will be noticeably enhanced.
- Democracy for the people will continuously expand. The democratic system will be further improved, and the forms of democracy will become more diversified. The people's enthusiasm, initiative and creativity will be given greater scope. The basic strategy of governing the country under the rule of law will be implemented in an all-around way. The government under the rule of law will basically be built. Judicial credibility will be continuously enhanced. Human rights will be earnestly respected and guaranteed.
- Cultural soft power will be markedly enhanced. The socialist core values system will be embedded deeply in the hearts of the people. The quality of the civilization and the level of social civilization will be visibly improved. Cultural products will become more diversified. The system of public cultural services will be basically completed. The cultural industry will become the pillar industry of the national economy. The globalization of Chinese culture will be intensified.

The foundation for building a powerful country with a socialist culture will become more solid.

- People’s lives will be comprehensively improved. Equal access to basic public services will be ensured. The education of all people and the cultivation of innovative talents will noticeably increase, making China a powerful country in terms of talent and human resources. Education will be fundamentally modernized. Employment will increase. The income distribution gap will narrow. The middle-income groups will continuously expand. The groups for which poverty alleviation efforts are necessary will dramatically decrease. The social security system will cover all people. All people will enjoy access to basic medical and health services. The housing guarantee system will essentially take shape. Society will remain harmonious and stable.
- Great progress will be made in building a resource-saving and environmentally friendly society. The layout of the main functional areas will basically be formed. A preliminary system of resource recycling will be built. Energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP will decrease substantially. The total amount of emissions of the main pollutants will significantly decrease. The rate of forest coverage will increase. The ecosystem will become more stable, and notable improvements in the human environment will be made.

In comparing the new requirements for the goal of building a well-off society as specified in the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and those identified by the 16th National Congress and the 17th National Congress, we find many noteworthy changes.

For example, in shifting the focus on doubling the GDP from “aggregate” to “per capita”, the requirement of and preconditions for doubling the per capita income of urban and rural residents and the preconditions for that requirement, including optimizing structures, improving performance, reducing consumption and protecting the environment, are added. This well-off society is based on a higher standard. The per capita GDP is better able to reflect the people’s achievements in economic development, while the per capita disposable income better reflects the people’s actual life. This shows that the new requirements for building a well-off society in an all-around way place more emphasis on putting people first.

For example, the new requirements stress “becoming an innovation-oriented country” rather than the “basic realization of industrialization”. This change indicates that in elevating our development to a new level, seeking industrial development in a merely labor-intensive way cannot lay a solid foundation for realizing the goal of building a well-off society.

Furthermore, there is a new requirement that “the residents’ consumption rate must rise steadily”. In the next few years, China’s residents’ consumption rate will gradually decline and will be lower than not only the average international level but also the level in some developing countries. This suggests that there is no rational coordination between China’s economic growth and the improvement of people’s lives. In fact, economic development cannot be pursued only for its own sake; all developmental achievements, including material and spiritual achievements, should

be shared by the overwhelming majority of the people and should meet their increasing material and cultural needs. This new requirement precisely marks a shift in the orientation of the value of development.

Moreover, the concept of an “ecological civilization” in the goal of building a well-off society, as identified during the 17th National Congress, was made more concrete during the 18th National Congress. This shows that our understanding of the relationship between people and nature has reached a new level. Nature is no longer merely something to be exploited and conquered by human beings; on the contrary, it is an independent entity closely related to human development. To live a sustainable and healthy life, human beings must harmoniously coexist with nature. Building an ecologically aware civilization is the prerequisite and foundation for achieving harmony between people and nature. In recent years, the social contradictions resulting from ecological destruction have increased, highlighting the importance and urgency of building an ecologically aware civilization.

3 “Generally” Does not Amount to “All-around”

When seeing and recognizing China’s achievements, we should also be aware that its present well-off society is still at the primary stage and at a low level, not all-around, and its development has been highly unbalanced. We must recognize the great importance of the following issues:

- The present society is partially, not entirely, well off.

The goal of building a well-off society in an all-around way was proposed during the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China based on the indicator of China’s per capita GDP exceeding 800 USD. At present, with the increasing economic aggregate in China, the per capita GDP has surpassed 5000 USD. Accordingly, the overall wealth of the people has greatly increased, and their income level has continuously risen. Therefore, there is a sufficient factual basis for using the concept “per capita” to describe a well-off society. However, it must be noted that the average number may conceal many problems while explaining a host of others. In a scenario in which the wealth gap is widening in Chinese society, using the average number may cause misunderstanding. For example, in 2014, the per capita net income of farmers in China was 9892 yuan, but the farmers with a net income below that amount accounted for more than half. Therefore, in regard to an entire society being well off, we must comprehend whether most or only a minority of the society is entirely well off.

- Misunderstanding of numbers must be prevented in judging the progress of building a well-off society.

A very important indicator for measuring a well-off society is Engel’s coefficient, which is the proportion of food expenditure in the total expenditure of a household. If Engel’s coefficient in a society is lower than 50%, it indicates a well-off society.

In 2002, Engel's coefficient in China's rural and urban areas was 46.2 and 37.7%, respectively. Over more than 30 years of development, Engel's coefficient rapidly decreased. In 2013, Engel's coefficient in rural and urban areas in China was 37.2 and 35.0%, respectively. These numbers appeared to be good. However, given the current actual situation of people in China, we should be able to realize whether Engel's coefficient had naturally declined or had been forced to decline. "Naturally declined" means that the proportion of food expenditure in the total expenditure decreased with the increasing income of the people despite the rising improvement in diet. "Forced to decline" means that other household expenditures are fixed so that the dietary level can only be lower, and the money put into savings is used to indicate other expenditures. At present, many people must restrain their dietary level due to increasing housing prices, educational and medical expenses, and uncertain future expenses for old-age care. The decline in Engel's coefficient in these circumstances does not make us optimistic and relaxed because the society is not truly well off under such circumstances; on the contrary, the numbers have been misunderstood.

– Being economically well off is a foundation but not the whole story.

Among a number of indicators for measuring the goal of building a well-off society in China, the rate of the realization of economic indicators is relatively high, while that of other indicators is relatively low. This shows that the current society in China is mainly an economically well-off society. Indeed, being economically well off is the foundation for being well off in other aspects, but the foundation is not the whole story.

Deng Xiaoping said the problems that arose after development were no fewer than those in the case of underdevelopment. When sufficient food and clothing are not yet available, the people's feelings about such social issues as equity and justice are not obvious or intense. However, improving the people's material circumstances will also improve their spiritual, cultural, health and security needs, and their requirements for political participation will increase accordingly; the people will no longer be satisfied with being economically well off and will have specific requirements for becoming culturally, socially, and even politically well off.

A well-off society includes not only material life but also working conditions, health, social relationships, and the political and natural environments. Furthermore, the state of being well off includes the subjective feelings of individuals such as their sense of happiness, satisfaction, accomplishment, belonging, identity, mastery and freedom. We must understand the purpose of building a well-off society, whether efforts are made towards an all-around development of the people or in the opposite direction. A well-off society is built for the people rather than at the expense of the people in some aspects. Therefore, we must have a scientific understanding of the price that we should and can be prepared and expected to accept to realize a well-off society. Abandonment of the aspect of people's lives regarding rest and leisure may improve some material conditions, but then they are not really well off.

- The precondition for individuals being well off is that the society is well off.

The building of a well-off society is designed mainly to increase the wealth of social individuals, but it is also essential to improve the social environment accordingly. Otherwise, a large part of individual wealth would need to be used to pay the social costs that should not be paid in such a way, and the hard-won wealth of social individuals will be submerged. For example, more and more urban households are now buying cars. This seems to mark an increasing living standard for urban residents and an upgrade in consumer goods. However, a considerable number of these residents buy cars because they need them to commute between home and work. Why do they have such a need? The purchase is not made because they want to enjoy themselves; on the contrary, it occurs because urban public transportation is so underdeveloped that residents must address their transportation needs on their own. This situation obviously individualizes the social costs. Moreover, the soaring price of housing in cities is another reason that social costs for residents are rising. The per capita housing expenditure of Chinese urban residents rose by 68.7% in 2010 compared with 2002, which was largely attributable to the increasing cost per area rather than the extension of residents' housing areas. This increase prompts us to realize that social public services must be made available in building a well-off society. If public services and social construction do not increase correspondingly, the level of being well off for individuals will be greatly reduced.

4 Obstacles to and Challenges for Building a Well-off Society

For Chinese society, the root cause restricting the realization of the goal of building a well-off society is the relative backwardness of the productive social forces and the relatively low level of social wealth. However, the restrictions of some unscientific and doubtful social operational modes, systems and institutional arrangements appear to be reflected more directly. We must gain a clear understanding of these problems to actively cope with them.

4.1 There are Doubts About the Manner of Achieving Wealth

In recent years, we have advocated actions to prioritize efficiency, but institutional deficiencies have existed in guaranteeing equity. As a result, the gap in social wealth, regional disparities and the urban-rural gap have widened; the Gini coefficient has approached 0.45 and has even been higher; and the wealth held by 10% of the population has accounted for nearly half. As some people have been encouraged and allowed to become rich before others, no explicit institutional

guarantee has been provided with regard to the precondition “through labor and lawful operation”; the people who became rich first over the years did not accumulate wealth mainly through their work but tended to transfer and accumulate wealth by force and trickery. This kind of path-dependent accumulation of wealth has gradually become common practice.

In building a well-off society in an all-around way, we should pursue common prosperity and allow the people to share the achievements of reform and development. According to Marxism, production determines distribution; in turn, distribution acts on production by promoting or hindering the development of the productive forces. If distribution is irrational, its process and results run counter to the requirements of common prosperity, violating the essential requirement of socialism, and the people’s enthusiasm and creativity cannot be given full play; thus, a well-off society cannot be built in an all-around way. Deng Xiaoping said: “We have stressed common prosperity from the beginning of the reform, and common prosperity will become the central issue one day. Socialism is not the system in which the minority gets rich while the majority is poor. The greatest superior advantage of socialism is common prosperity. This embodies the essence of socialism.”⁵ We must ensure that all achievements gained due to the reform, opening up and socialist modernization, including material and spiritual achievements, are shared by the overwhelming majority of the people and meet their increasing material and cultural needs. This is in the fundamental best interest of people of all nationalities across China.

4.2 The Social Lifestyle is Exposed to a Number of Hidden Troubles

Although China has become generally well off, our calculation of a well-off society entails, in the final analysis, the road towards modernization for a low- and middle-income country. China’s per capita GDP is ranked lower than No. 100 in the world under the standards set by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. However, at present, the lifestyle of some groups in Chinese society greatly exceeds the current level of development in China. According to the relevant data, in 2013, the sales volume of the Chinese luxury goods market reached 5.2 billion USD, making China the second largest luxury goods consumer in the world. The forecast indicates that the sales volume of luxury goods will surpass 11.5 billion USD and account for 29% of the total sales in the world by 2015. This kind of lifestyle that some people lead not only wastes social wealth but also causes conflicts among social groups. In building a well-off society in an all-around way, it is necessary to

⁵*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 364.

prevent such a lifestyle. In addition, it is also necessary to maintain vigilance to ensure that extravagance and waste do not persist in some government departments.

4.3 There is an Urgent Need to Improve the Public Service Mode

Currently, public services have not been duly established in Chinese society because government departments dodge their responsibilities, and some members of the government excessively provide public goods to small groups. Both phenomena pose challenges for building a well-off society in an all-around way. In the process of building a well-off society in an all-around way, we should focus on solving the problems that are the greatest concerns of the people and are related to their most immediate and realistic interests, so that the achievements of economic development are reflected in improving people's livelihood; in particular, attention should be paid to vigorously building the social security system, the national education system, and the national fitness and medical health systems to comprehensively improve the material and spiritual life, political rights and living environment of people across China. Action should be taken to ensure that the social security system is as close to perfect as possible; social employment is relatively complete; ownership of family property generally increases; social democracy becomes more sound; the socialist legal system is further improved and the basic strategy for governing the country under the rule of law is comprehensively carried out; the political, economic and cultural rights and interests of the people are earnestly respected and guaranteed; people enjoy the opportunity to receive a good education in a wider scope at a higher level; and that improvements in the ideological, ethical, scientific, and cultural quality of life and the health of the whole Chinese nation are visible and felt in people's lives.

4.4 The Costs of Social Transformation Increasingly Build up

Building a well-off society is a process that starts from a lack of affluence and moves towards affluence and a transformation from a state in which less justice exists to one in which justice is ensured. In this process, it is very difficult to make the groups that have gained great interests surrender those interests that should not belong to them. Many of our policies and measures often focus on increment rather than stock, so the costs of social transformation continuously accumulate and cannot be diffused. In fact, not only increment but also stock should be considered in sharing achievements, since stock is more straightforward and practical. We must seek out the

solutions and ways for diffusing the costs of social transformation; otherwise, difficulties in building a well-off society in an all-around way will be inevitable.

5 Cultural Development in Building a Well-off Society in an All-around Way

Presently, the status of culture as a soft power is increasingly recognized throughout society. The power of culture is soft in comparison to the visible hard power of such elements as the economy and the military. However, being invisible, culture cannot be considered “a girl who can dress up at will”. If there is no direction or fundamentals and cornerstone for culture in a society, culture is only “soft” and has no “power”. Therefore, there are “hard requirements” for soft power.

5.1 Hard Requirements at the Ideological Level

As a spiritual phenomenon and product, culture has multiple attributes, and ideology is one of the most essential of those attributes. According to Marxism, culture is the ideological reflection of the economy and politics of a certain society and acts upon that economy and politics. In the book *On New Democracy*, Mao Zedong more clearly stated: “A certain culture, such as the ideological culture, mirrors the politics and economy of a certain society and exerts a great influence on the politics and economy of a certain society.”

The ideological attribute of culture determines that culture plays a crucial role in a society and defines the standpoints regarding fundamental issues in a society, such as value judgment, definitions of good and bad or good and evil, events that should and should not occur, what things are meaningful or absurd, etc. Why are things that should not exist in one society taken for granted in another society? Why are things that are sacred and inviolable in one society be considered amusing or profane in another society? All these differences originate from the ideological function of culture.

Ideology is not “fictitious” in people’s minds; it reflects the political and economic interests of a certain class in its pursuit of a common value. As long as classes, political parties and states exist, ideology will not fundamentally end. These fundamental interests will be expressed in different ways along with political, economic, scientific and technological developments. At present, some people in Western society promote a concept of going “beyond ideology” and agitate for weakening and abandoning ideology. Actually, “de-ideological” and “anti-ideological” approaches are strong ideological behaviors.

Culture has a distinctive ideological attribute and a more powerful ideological function.

Once culture is really accepted by the people, it acts as an invisible but strong force to draw human behaviors into the institutional track set by cultural values. This power is not external; it comes from the heart of the people and represents their consciousness and willingness. It may even be unconscious, but its effect exhibits a strong sense of a norm. As Max Weber mentioned, it is an unconscious choice for people to observe cultural and ethical customs “without thinking” and “for convenience”. With such unconsciousness, cultural and ethical customs may still be mandatory for a time, and even a dictator cannot overturn them.⁶ Under such circumstances, “following one’s heart’s desire without overstepping the line” and “being willing”, as we often say, will occur.

Given the understanding of the powerful ideological function of culture, the USA is especially keen on peddling its Hollywood films to the world and sometimes is even willing to unprofitably show such films in developing countries. Why? A research report from a US scholar in 1994 disclosed the secret: If in a country, especially an eastern country, we see that the people drink Coca-Cola, wear jeans, listen to rock and roll and see Hollywood blockbusters, we can say that despite the differences between that country’s social system and ours, in fact, the two social states are not so different.

The “universal value” vehemently preached at present in Western society has the ideological attribute and function of culture. Confrontations between fire and sword cannot conquer socialism, and economic sanctions and embargoes cannot throttle socialism; thus, Western capitalists intend to reach their goals through culture.

Whatever means others adopt, we must adopt the necessary countermeasures. When others wield ideological weapons, we cannot respond with combat power. Since the 18th National Congress, fostering the socialist core values has been viewed as the fundamental task for cultural construction in Chinese society because the socialist core values embody the essence of social ideology, are the soul of rejuvenating the country and the quintessence of the advanced socialist culture, and determine the direction of the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Cultural self-consciousness is primarily a high level of consciousness of the function and attributes of cultural ideology.

5.2 *Hard Requirements at the Level of Spiritual Home*

When talking about culture, we often associate it with phrases such as “cultural deposits”, “cultural inheritance” and “cultural continuity”. Actually, these words express one fact: culture has history and roots that constitute the spiritual home of a nation and a society. The fine traditions of Chinese culture and the great spirit of the Chinese nation are spiritual forces that inspire people of all nationalities across China to advance. This is the reason that the Communist Party of China has stressed

⁶Commons (1962, p. 90).

that since its inception, the Party has faithfully inherited and carried forward the fine Chinese traditions and culture.

We emphasize the attributes of a culture as a spiritual home because a culture contains the memory and life of a nation. During the development of human civilization, various civilizations have had long or short histories with no differences in superiority or advantage. This is the diversity of civilizations. Different civilizations have given birth to different types of culture.

The spiritual home is the embodiment of cultural diversity. The greatest characteristic of cultural diversity is that a value choice that is fully rational for one cultural body may be “irrational” for another cultural body. Eskimos living above the Arctic Circle cannot understand the faiths and habits of aborigines living in the African jungle. Content may be expressed in different ways in different cultural environments. For example, human love is the highest and most valuable emotion in human society. A society without love is intolerable, and love should be regarded as the core value of any society. However, love is not an abstract emotion; it inherits history and culture, so the form and connotations of love vary with different cultural forms. In the Western Christian culture, the parents and children in a family are “brothers in God” and are equal regardless of seniority; thus, their love is a universal one because anyone’s love for anyone else is “the same love of God for the common people”. In traditional Chinese culture, it is essential to treat parents and the elderly with filial respect and it is discourteous for children to call their father “brother”. Therefore, in China, love is kindhearted and relational. Although the benevolent love others, that love is different. The types of love that people show towards their parents, children, spouses and heroes are totally different in form and connotation.

Undoubtedly, culture must develop, but luxuriant foliage cannot be separated from its roots. No matter whether a culture keeps pace with the times, as its content expands and its form changes, the cultural spirit remains unbroken and always returns to its origin. Every nation has its own different spiritual home. Your home may be a foreign land for others. Your own home may be unsatisfactory, but any home is full of dependable warmth, tranquility and peace. As a Chinese saying goes, a famous garden far from home is excellent, but it is unsuitable as a place to live for a long time. This saying reveals the difference between home and a foreign land. No matter how far a person travels, he or she will ultimately return to his or her home.

Culture is unquestionably rich. Chinese culture never rejects the absorption and adoption of external cultures, although the main body of Chinese culture cannot be replaced. A great characteristic of Chinese culture is that it is highly capable of integrating external cultures—many external cultures are incorporated into Chinese culture after being introduced into it. When external cultures are absorbed, the main body of Chinese culture utilizes, sinicizes and localizes those cultures; combines them with traditional Chinese culture; incorporates Chinese cultural elements; and brands them with a Chinese cultural mark.

Mao Zedong said that the treatment of external cultures should be based on China's actual needs, as if we treated foods by means of chewing and gastrointestinal movement. The historian Fan Wenlan stated that a man eats pork to turn it into muscle and a strong body through digestion rather than becoming a pig by eating pork. These remarks are clear as a bell for those who introduce but do not digest foreign cultures.

At present, against the backdrop of globalization, the Western developed countries are accustomed to utilizing their own political and economic advantages to negate the cultural advantages of other countries and impose their cultural identity on other countries. Some countries lose their basic confidence in their own cultures, have a sense of inferiority, or even take the initiative in adopting elements from European culture due to their economic and political disadvantages. In fact, differences and diversity are inevitable in social development and mark the progress of civilization in a modern society. As a Chinese saying goes, if different things coexist in harmony, diverse things are generated; if all things are the same, the world will no longer develop. If all nations and countries choose the same culture, human civilizations will lose their motivational power, become rigid and decline, no matter how advanced, modern and scientific that culture is.

The cultural confidence that we stress makes it necessary to cherish, preserve and carry forward the spiritual home of our culture.

5.3 Hard Requirements at the Level of Practice Among People

Culture is not a vase in a showcase or the words in a heap of musty old papers. Culture should be used to shape people's thoughts, guide their lives and influence their behaviors. Therefore, only when culture is practiced among the people can it have vitality and value. Practice among people means that culture must represent their interests and voices; cater to their needs, preferences, aesthetic habits and value orientation; and attract their attention and participation.

– The culture practiced among the people is primarily the one from the people.

It seems that cultures are created by gifted scholars, beautiful women and elites; classical works are explained by sages; and poems and songs are the productions of men of letters, while the ordinary people are bystanders who have no right to discuss these things. In fact, this is not true—people's lives are available in a natural and crude form, but they are the most vivid, the richest and the most fundamental sources of culture, and how people live their lives is the only inexhaustible source. A culture separated from the way people live their lives is barren, powerless and unsustainable. With the development of modern society and the increase in cultural

and educational levels, people have changed from the source of culture to practitioners of culture by participating in-depth in its formation. Culture has been transformed from the privilege of a small number of upper-class intellectuals to an aspect of the needs and lives of ordinary people.

– The culture practiced among the people must belong to the people.

In judging whether a thing belongs to us, the key lies in checking whether it is associated with our daily life and needs. The culture that is far removed from reality and the people will be discarded by the people. The culture to be practiced among Chinese people must address the realistic needs and issues of China, serve the production and life practices of the Chinese people, take into account the customs acceptable to the Chinese people, and create forms of expression that are suitable for the people's way of thinking and aesthetic tastes. While our society is still in the primary stage of socialism and most of the people have just begun to live well-off lives focusing on the basic daily necessities, cultural works full of jewels, luxurious houses and high-end cars, emperors and other rich and powerful people, trouble-makers, and airs and graces cannot be part of their culture; such works will even not be recognized and may lead to conflicts. In contrast, some TV lectures about studies of the ancient civilization, though academically suspect and incomprehensible to insiders, cater to the people's needs and to their thirst for classical culture and are regarded by the people as representing their own culture. There is a precedent for such a phenomenon in the history of cultural development—as Buddhism from India was introduced to China, the sects that stayed rigidly in the groove were bleak, and those that rebelled against orthodoxy became the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism; eventually, the developmental trend of Buddhism in China outgrew that in India, its birthplace.

– The culture practiced among the people must be people-oriented.

With the progress of civilization in a modern society, cultural rights have become one of the basic rights of the people. People need adequate food and clothing, but they also want to become spiritually and culturally sufficient and well off. Culture is not a recreation for a select few but is a right and interest of the people. Culture should serve the people, which is China's fundamental policy for cultural development. However, while addressing the diverse spiritual and cultural needs of the people, the culture practiced among them should express their rights and promote their free all-around development with dignity. It should be noted that some works labeled as mass culture pander vulgarly to the intuitive needs and instinctive desire of the people. These views and notions are highly unfavorable and even detrimental to the people. Some so-called "cultural factories" are glossed over without the people's knowledge. Our culture should not only cater to the intuitive needs of the people and reflect their instinctive desires but also bring about improvement, civilization and education through its gradual influence. By doing so, it truly becomes people-oriented.

6 Political Advantages of a Well-off Society

The political system of a society relies on the unique recipe on which its footing, development and success are based that cannot be available in other systems. Demonstrating and utilizing political advantages is of crucial significance for achieving the goals and blueprint of the system. The political advantages must be grasped clearheadedly, scientifically and accurately. If some by-products of political advantages are mistaken as political advantages or some undesirable elements are considered political advantages, unavoidable predicaments may make it impossible to realize political development in the institutional design. In severer cases, the real political advantages may be downplayed, forgotten or undermined so that the foundation for the political system is ultimately weakened or destroyed.

6.1 *Political Advantages Depend Upon Political Goals*

Political advantages are never abstract and cannot be exaggerated by being separated from the political goals of a society. Different political goals call for different political systems, while different political systems present different political advantages. If goals are likened to swimming, the tortoise has obvious advantages; if goals are likened to long-distance running, the hare is bound to prevail. If the political advantages based on different political goals are compared, such a comparison is tantamount to a running or swimming race between the hare and the tortoise, a contest that is unfair and meaningless.

Moreover, political advantages result from the endogenous crystallization of political systems and cannot be grafted. Some minor terms and skills uncritically introduced from external systems, though good in some systems and politically advantageous in others, cannot be converted into our own political advantages or properly digested.

Therefore, political advantages must be closely associated with political goals, and different political advantages must be formed, cultivated and forged according to different political goals. In Chinese society, the political goals are always clear. The following three tasks will be accomplished through the political system.

First, the country becomes prosperous and strong, and the Chinese nation is rejuvenated. Any development of Chinese society must focus first on “the Chinese nation” under the theme “China”. China is integrated into the world as a large country with its own values supported by its consistent culture; the Chinese nation prospers harmoniously with other nations in the world; and China does not weaken sovereignty, dissolve nations or lose itself amidst globalization. China participates in the economic and social division of labor in the international community to ensure the rise of a modern China rather than merely becoming a “world factory” and a worker for other countries. Covering an area of 9.60 million square kilometers, China is an indivisible whole. All its regions, including the eastern coastal

areas, western inland areas, and urban and rural communities, are developing in a coordinated way; it is unfeasible to make some regions extraordinarily prosperous at the expense of other regions because such prosperity is unsustainable, false, and even harmful.

Second, the people are rich and have become the master of the country. The fundamental and highest goal of developing Chinese society is to ensure that the Chinese people become the master of the country and achieve a better standard of living with more dignity; everyone in China freely develops in an all-around way. Therefore, the development of Chinese society must ultimately be evaluated by all 1.3 billion of the Chinese people rather than just some of the people in Chinese society. Social stratification is the objective trend of social development, but social differences cannot be used as a pretext for differences in political rights. All 1.3 billion people in Chinese society have different identities, professions and abilities, and everyone must be equally treated with regard to political rights and be able to enjoy the sacred and inviolable right to become the master of the country and the right to free and all-around development. If not everyone has access to such interests, then the interests of the vast majority of the groups in Chinese society must be considered the highest interests, and the greatest emphasis must be placed on guaranteeing the rights of that vast majority. Therefore, it is unnecessary for us to evade this responsibility.

Third, China's economy is developing soundly and rapidly on the basis of the above two requirements. With China and the Chinese people as the theme and main body, respectively, we actively draw upon all systems and methods that are conducive to our development; we open-mindedly learn all technologies and models that can stimulate our development; we mobilize all positive factors and encourage all resources and factors to develop together with us.

These political goals are the basic persistent pursuit and consensus of the Communist Party of China and of the Chinese people. The political system of Chinese society develops according to these goals, and the political advantages of Chinese society should be fostered based on these goals. When these political goals are not recognized in discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of China's political system and the merits and demerits of its political advantages, those views are certainly incompatible with ours.

6.2 The Inevitable Choice of China's Political Advantages

When the political goals for developing Chinese society are identified, the political advantages of Chinese society will naturally be discovered: the purpose of the political party is good, and the institutional stance is clear and is recognized by the people. The political advantages of Chinese society absolutely and only reflect these contents.

First, there is a core leadership with a lofty political program—the Communist Party of China.

Thousands of political parties exist in the world, but only the Communist Party of China has enshrined interests that are “not its own special interests” in its constitution, and only the members of the Communist Party of China can say that they are the special materials of the people. This claim cannot be made by any other political party, and no other political party is prepared to do it. This program ensures that the Communist Party of China has stood out among many other political parties in becoming the only governing party in China. The Communist Party of China tells Chinese society that communism serves the interests of the vast majority of the people in their practical, economic and political life. The vast majority of the people includes the proletariat and the working class and is described in different ways at different times, but it is the vast majority in the society. Since the Communist Party of China practices in governance the requirement that “the Communist Party of China keeps in mind not its own special interests but the interests of the working class and the vast majority of the people”, as declared in its constitution, the Party is recognized and convincingly supported by society. Only when one has no secular desires can he or she reach a higher realm. Since there is a group of more than 80 million people who do not pursue their own special interests and who devote themselves to society, every difficulty can be overcome, every power can be conquered and any miracle can be created.

Second, a basic system ensures that the people are the master of the country—the system of the people’s congress. According to the study of institutional philosophy, systems are not neutral; different systems have different advantaged groups and show varying levels of attention to the interests of different social groups. In China, a country with a population of 1.3 billion, most of whom are ordinary workers and farmers, the design of the system must ensure that the vast majority can master and make use of this system and adopt it to safeguard and exercise their own rights. Any arrangement of the system that excludes the vast majority of the people and favors only a few elite groups is not politically legal in Chinese society and is bound not to be supported by the vast majority. The system of the people’s congress in Chinese society produces a unitary power structure in China; it embodies the nature of socialism and the principle that “all state powers come from and belong to the people”. The essence of the system’s logic consists of ensuring that the people are the master of the country.

Third, the people support the Communist Party of China, recognize the developmental goals for Chinese society and have expectations for living a better life. Only the people create history and are the fundamental forces for driving the development of Chinese society. Therefore, in Chinese society, the greatest, most fundamental and indispensable political advantage is the people’s recognition and support. The Communist Party of China vows to wholeheartedly serve the people, so the people support it because China follows the socialist road. China’s development program aims to make it possible for the people to live a better life, so the people actively take part in reforms and developmental practices.

The advantage, frequently mentioned by us, that “forces are concentrated to accomplish large undertakings” is neither isolated nor self-born; on the contrary, it comes from the people’s recognition and support of such “large undertakings”.

Recognition and support naturally facilitate efforts to concentrate the forces, which is impossible by any means without such a response. The phenomena of “deciding everything by one man’s say” and “overriding” that accompany these efforts are not advantages; rather, they are great obstacles to the development of Chinese society. Therefore, prudence must be exercised in terms of this advantage, while overemphasizing it will lead to defeat and harm.

6.3 Political Advantages Must be Protected and Conserved

The Communist Party of China notes that the political advantages are not available forever and unchanged. The advantages available in the past may be unavailable now; the advantages enjoyed in the past may no longer be enjoyed now; and the advantages enjoyed now may not be enjoyed forever.

As Chinese society develops and changes, new situations and new problems emerge; the political advantages of Chinese society are subject to severe challenges from outside and more importantly, from within. If we accomplish our goals, external doubts, jealousies, and even threats will be dispelled.

First, we should practice the purpose of the political party in governance. In recent years, people had many complaints about some members of the Party because these members talked often about their purpose but took little action, indulged in empty talk and carried out little practical work. Thus, we should listen to criticism with an open mind, guard against mistakes and correct mistakes if we do make them. We should also sharpen our vigilance against another phenomenon—some members and organizations of the political party pay decreasing attention to its purposes and faith, some cast doubt on oaths they have sworn, and some have become less confident. With such a mind-set, the governing purpose is reflected less in practical governance. Friedrich Engels once explicitly stated a political party theory—if a political party becomes increasingly fearless and selfless, it will agree more with the interests and desires of workers.⁷ The members of the Communist Party of China should definitely adhere to their own faith—as the members become increasingly fearless and selfless, they will conform more to the interests and desires of the Chinese people. We especially stress that temporary failure to accomplish this is not terrible, but if the members have no desire to pursue this goal or even think that it is unnecessary, negative consequences will follow.

Second, we should ensure that the operation of the systems reflects the original intention and eliminates failures and variations. A good system is embodied in both its philosophy and its operation. If a good system is not well executed, is replaced by an inferior one or is overtly implemented but covertly not adhered to, these problems are harmful. We should study and summarize the experience and lessons from operating the system of the people’s congress, opportunistically carry forward the

⁷Marx and Engels (1995a, p. 258).

successful and effective practices, and nip the defective and irregular behaviors in the bud. We should also abandon the practices that are being executed but have failed to tally with the reality of the social development and the improvement in the people's rights by ensuring that the people's representatives really represent them and truly exercise their powers and that government departments and organizations obey the supreme power of the people's congress.

Finally, advanced actions should be taken to consolidate the people's support. Genuine ideals should be used to build a consensus. Developmental achievements should be demonstrated to meet the new expectations of the people. In this regard, we should carry out much painstaking and arduous work showing that "we consciously make up missed lessons" and "we prove ourselves".

For example, the people are currently disappointed in the behavior of some members of the political party; we should not ignore such disappointment. Some members of the Party defend their behaviors, inconsistent with the purposes of the Party, under the pretext that members of the Communist Party of China are also human beings who feel aggrieved at not being recognized by the people. They fail to understand and are reluctant to accept the judgment that members of the Communist Party of China are, more importantly, human beings who must be made of special materials. In fact, this judgment is very natural for the authentic members of the Communist Party of China. Its logic can take only one form and cannot be reversed. If it is reversed, it is fallacious and untenable; the people may ask: Your thoughts are not better than ours, and your behaviors are not more advanced than ours; therefore, why do you continue to govern? This question is very serious.

Furthermore, we must thoroughly explain to the people the basic connotations and concrete content of the common ideal in socialism with Chinese characteristics and ensure that the people really believe in, understand and pursue that ideal. We cannot talk about it vaguely and insincerely and steer clear of the crucial point. A theory cannot solve the problems to which the people pay attention and answer their questions, making the people disappointed and distrustful; they may even raise objections. One famous quotation from Karl Marx states that as long as a theory is persuasive, it can master the people; as long as a theory is thorough, it is persuasive. Thoroughness means that the fundamental issues are grasped.⁸ The task is arduous and the road is long before we achieve theoretical thoroughness. This achievement requires wisdom, courage, fundamental broad-mindedness and selflessness.

Moreover, it is imperative to prove the real developmental achievements in Chinese society to the people. Merely ensuring that the GDP ranks No. 2 in the world without a substantial increase in the national income is less meaningful. If there is no basic guarantee of housing for the people, tall buildings are nothing but additional bubbles. If the farmers who have lost their land cannot live and work in peace and contentment in cities, urbanization is not helpful but harmful. If not everyone lives a well-off life and not every area and village become well off, a statistically "well-off" society is less valuable.

⁸Marx and Engels (1995b, p. 9).

When we successfully address these issues, the political advantages of Chinese society will be naturally reflected, will produce an enormous effect, and will be deemed true thanks to the sustained, rapid and healthy development of Chinese society. We will not need to say more in response to irresponsible remarks and carping comments.

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Chapter 3

Strategic Measures: Comprehensively Intensifying the Reform

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee, with comrade Xi Jinping as General Secretary, has proceeded from the overall situation and historical perspective to outline an important strategic line of thought to comprehensively intensify the reform and make a number of breakthroughs in reform theories and policies. Reform and opening up are the most distinctive characteristics of contemporary China, and promoting the reform with political courage and wisdom and systematically planning its form from a holistic perspective have been the distinctive characteristics of the intensification since the 18th National Congress. The Party's reform strategy has been elevated to a higher level, and China's reform and opening up have reached new dimensions.

1 Build a New Consensus for Reform

For more than 30 years in contemporary China, the reform has not only resulted in rapid economic development and enormous social progress but has also achieved fruitful results in institutional innovations. As the chief architect of reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping attached great importance to these institutional innovations. He stressed many times that reform was revolutionary; of course, this revolution targeted institutions rather than people.¹ “If the reform is not carried out and institutional innovations are not made, many problems cannot be solved.” With reform and opening up, we abolish old institutions and establish new ones, promote benefits and remove harm through institutional innovations so that the socialist system is improved and consolidated and China's productive forces are further emancipated and developed.

Undoubtedly, the socialist system is one of the best in the development of human society; however, a good system is realized through a series of specific institutions

¹Deng (1994a, p. 135).

at different levels. The historical development shows that the systems and institutions at different levels are not always suitable for the developmental requirements of the productive social forces, nor are they always beneficial in improving and developing the fundamental systems. Therefore, to ensure the improvement and development of the fundamental systems, innovating specific systems and institutions is an objective requirement for historical development.

Deng Xiaoping stated: “After the basic system of socialism is established, it is necessary to fundamentally change the economic system, which restricts the development of the productive forces, in order to build a vibrant socialist economic system.”² He also said: “The reform of the economic system is the only way to develop the productive forces.”³ Our reform is a great institutional innovation based on China’s national conditions and on the experience and lessons of the socialist construction, in which the actual level of the social productive forces and the objective requirements for further development are considered to consciously adjust the part of the production relation that does not fit with the productive forces and adjust the part of the superstructure that is not suited to the economic foundation.

Specifically, the unfolding and intensification of China’s rural reform were accompanied by the innovation and development of the system of responsibility for the rural household contract, and the reform of state-owned enterprises was accompanied by the expansion of the autonomous right of the enterprise, the implementation of the economic responsibility system, the replacement of profit delivery by taxes, the improvement of the operating mechanisms, and the adoption and improvement of the system of responsibility of the factory director (manager). A subsequent series of institutional innovations included the establishment of the modern enterprise system and the modern property right system; with respect to the opening up, special economic zones were established and 14 coastal cities were opened. We innovated the system of operations and management and the system of foreign economic cooperation by drawing upon foreign capital, advanced technologies and management experience. This process is most obvious in our efforts to improve the socialist ownership structure and explore the ownership system. To adapt to the needs of opening up, in 1984, *Decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Concerning Economic System Reform* was adopted during the Third Plenary Session of the 12th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which institutionally identified the status and roles of foreign capital in China’s social economy: “Foreign capital is utilized and foreign investors are attracted to China for establishing joint ventures, cooperative enterprises and completely foreign-owned enterprises, which is the beneficial supplement necessary for China’s socialist economy.” As various market players matured, in 1992, the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China stated: “The ownership structure is dominated by public ownership, including ownership by the entire population and collective ownership, supplemented by individual economy, private

²*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 370.

³*Ibid*, p. 138.

economy and foreign-funded economy; diverse sectors of the economy have developed side by side for a long time, and different sectors of the economy can also voluntarily operate jointly in different ways.” Afterwards, *Decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Concerning Several Issues Relating to the Establishment of the Socialist Market Economic System* was adopted during the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which deleted “supplemented” and stated that the public sector remained dominant and diverse sectors of the economy had developed side by side. As the socialist market economy took root, in 1997, the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further noted: “Making the public sector maintain dominance and diverse sectors of the economy develop side by side is one basic economic system at the primary stage of China’s socialism.” With a focus on retaining and improving the basic economic system, the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China stressed: “We shall unswervingly consolidate and develop the public sector of the economy and steadfastly encourage, support and guide the development of the non-public sectors of the economy.” The Third Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China declared that the joint-stock system was the most important form of public ownership, which marked a new stage of further improvement and concretization in the innovation of China’s economic system.

The Communist Party of China has attached great importance to summarizing the achievements of the reform in institutional innovation. As early as 1962, Deng Xiaoping noted: “We should take the following attitude towards judging which form of production relationship is the best: the form through which it is easier to restore and develop agricultural production shall be adopted; the form that the people are willing to adopt should be adopted; if it is not legal, it should be turned into a legal one.”⁴ Institutional innovation in reform and opening up is a process of “turning the illegal aspects into legal ones”, with the practices that were once considered impermissible and illegal but that proved through practice to be feasible and beneficial for emancipating and developing the productive social forces being established, legalized and recognized through systematic and institutional arrangements. For example, the system that recognizes the intrinsic unity of planning and the market system and the existence of the planned commodity economy in socialism was proposed during the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China; it was one of the achievements of the early stage of China’s reform and opening up. Deng Xiaoping said: “It is political economics combining the basic principle of Marxism with China’s socialist practice; some remarks were new and had never been made by our predecessors.”⁵ He also said: “It is impossible to write such a document without the practice of the previous years; it was very awkward to write it because it might be considered a ‘heresy’”. To ensure that the document was not perceived as a heresy, it was fixed in the form of a system and an institution

⁴Deng (1994b, p. 323.)

⁵*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, pp. 83, 91.

through the National Congress of the Communist Party of China. In the subsequent 14, 15 and 16th National Congresses of the Communist Party of China, the progress was opportunely established in the institutional innovations as an achievement of the reform and opening up. We combined the socialist system with the market economic system, and we established and improved the socialist market economic system. These innovations were great pioneering steps in the history of the development of human institutions.

In turn, the institutional innovations have fundamentally guaranteed the fruitful achievements of reform and opening up. Some of the achievements made through reform and opening up are material ones, such as the increase in the economic aggregate and improvement of national strength and the people's living standard; some others involve mind-sets and social relationships, such as the new economic, political and social operational modes; scientific, economic, political and social relationships; and progressive thinking and philosophies. The material achievements may be relatively easy to recognize, while the achievements involving mind-sets and social relationships often encounter contrasting opinions. If the achievements of reform and development at the mind-set and social levels do not survive such challenges, the material achievements will be destroyed. Institutional innovations are essential for retaining and consolidating the achievements involving mind-sets and social relationships made by the reform and opening up. After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, we initiated market-oriented reform and made great achievements in various aspects of the reform, continuously strengthening the market mechanism. However, the fundamental role of the market in resource allocation had not yet been officially established. A considerable number of people held different views of the role of the market that directly affected the further intensification of the reform and the consolidation of its achievements. At this critical juncture, owing to Deng Xiaoping's scientific judgment that "the planned economy does not amount to socialism; there is also planning in capitalism, so that the market economy does not amount to capitalism, and there is also a market in socialism, so that both planning and the market are means", the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly vowed to establish the socialist market economic system. Five pillars of the socialist market economic system, including the market players, market system, market regulation, income distribution and social security system for guaranteeing an effective operation of the market, were constructed. The establishment of the socialist market economic system institutionally addressed the confusion of this line of thought and the inconsistency of the actions related to it and has fundamentally and vigorously safeguarded the achievements of the reform and opening up.

Further intensification of the reform and opening up calls for all-around breakthroughs in institutional innovations. Contemporary China has entered a crucial period of reform, opening up and development during which the contradictions have become more acute, the interests involved have become more complicated and the resistance has increased. Reform and opening up are accompanied by a difficult struggle that is inevitable and unavoidable. As shown by the

experience of more than 20 years of this process, in order to further intensify the reform and opening up, it is necessary to make more multi-dimensional breakthroughs in institutional innovations.

To bring about all-around breakthroughs in institutional innovations, it is essential to first make real institutional innovations and changes. Deng Xiaoping stressed that an institutional change was a fundamental institutional change rather than a minor modification of the original economic system. “We should fundamentally change the economic system, which restricts the development of the productive forces, to build a vibrant socialist economic system.”⁶ “If we do not resolutely reform the current system in terms of drawbacks, some severe problems that occurred in the past may reappear in the future. Only after a thorough reform to remove these drawbacks is carried out in a planned, step-by-step and resolute way can the people trust in our leadership, the Communist Party of China and socialism and can our cause be infinitely hopeful.”⁷ Institutional innovation is an endless process. The old and outdated systems should be removed, and further innovations and improvements should be made in new systems that were generated by the reform; we should not be content with the existing situation without further improvement and should not avoid the problems. Regarding these issues, Deng Xiaoping said: “This task may not be completely fulfilled by our generation, but at least we are responsible for laying a solid foundation and establishing the correct direction.”⁸

To make all-around breakthroughs in institutional innovations, it is also necessary to carry out comprehensive institutional innovations and changes. According to the Deng Xiaoping Theory, institutional innovation is a systematic engineering process. Deng Xiaoping said: “The change is an all-around one, including reform of the economic system, reform of the political system and reform in other fields.”⁹ “Our proposed reform covers the reform of the political system; as the reform of the current economic system advances, we are keenly aware of the necessity for reforming the political system. If we do not reform the political system, we cannot guarantee the achievements of the reform of the economic system and we cannot carry forward the reform of the economic system, and the development of the productive forces and the realization of the four modernizations will be hindered.”¹⁰ Based on this forward-looking strategic judgment, as early as 1980, Deng Xiaoping stressed his attention to studying the leadership system of the Party and state as well as other systems. “The issue of the system of leadership and of the organizational system are fundamental, overarching and involve stability and a long period of time. This issue has a vital bearing on the color of the Party and the state, and the

⁶*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 370.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 342.

⁹*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 176.

whole party must attach great importance to this issue.” “We must institutionally ensure that the political life of the Party and of the state, economic management and our entire social life are democratized.”¹¹ “If this issue cannot be fundamentally addressed so that it is possible to build the destiny of a country on the reputation of one or two people for a fairly long time, it is very unhealthy and dangerous; there will be no problems if no incident occurs; once incidents occur, the situation will be out of control.”¹² In 1987, Deng Xiaoping further stated: “The aging of the leadership group is a problem peculiar to China. The existing system of life tenure in the leading posts is a defect in our system; this problem should be institutionally solved by implementing a reform of the political system and developing a policy for replacing old cadres with younger ones and basing it on procedures, systems and laws and not on the preferences of the individuals.” In today’s reform and opening up, the problem suggested by Deng Xiaoping is more directly revealed. The reform and development of contemporary China require us to further deepen innovations in the economic system and, more importantly, steadily push forward to innovate the political system. The reforms of the political system and of the economic system should be interdependent and coordinated; otherwise, the phenomenon identified by Deng Xiaoping will occur: “If we merely carry out a reform of the economic system and not of the political system, the reform of the economic system will not be successful because of the obstacles from people. Things must be done by the people. If someone advocates delegation of powers, others retake the powers, and the solutions cannot work. From this perspective, the success of all of our reforms depends upon the reform of the political system.”¹³

To make all-around breakthroughs in institutional innovations, courage and insight are required. When initiating the establishment of the special zones, Deng Xiaoping vowed to blaze new trails. This is because reform, opening up and institutional innovations require adjustments of the existing interest structure in line with the times, historical trends and the will of the people and are bound to meet with objections from vested interest groups. It is not possible for this process to be smooth; thus, it may face great resistance and unexpected setbacks. Therefore, reform may be more difficult, and the work involved in creating it may be more arduous. It is impossible for us to be afraid of such difficulties, and we must indomitably press forward with innovations to the system and to the institutions in order to replace bad systems, the bad institutional environment, and the bad institutional path towards change with better ones and to make great progress in institutional innovations and provide a scientific, healthy, standardized and progressive institutional guarantee for the crucial period of reform and development and the further intensification of the reform and opening up.

¹¹*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 336.

¹²*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 311.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 164.

2 Achieve the Transformation of the Reform

In more than 30 years, the reform has promoted the transformation of Chinese society. In the future, the changing society will impel the transformation of the reform in China.

2.1 *Directly Confront the Reform*

The reform that we pursue is merely aspirational. In fact, only when reform is appropriate to the current social situation and has social appeal can society recognize and tolerate the price that it must pay. Such a reform is naturally regarded by society as good.

The philosophy of the reform launched in the late 1970s, regardless of allowing some people to become rich before others or taking economic construction or starting the socialist market economy as the central task, focused on recognizing and encouraging the pursuit of interests by members of society as the driving force of the reform. Such a choice was advisable and effective.

The progress and achievements in Chinese society over more than 30 years serve as the best defense and testimony for the reform. China's annual average economic growth rate has reached 9.8%, three times the average world level; China's economic aggregate ranks No. 3 and almost No. 2 in the world; and China's foreign exchange reserve has reached 2 trillion USD, accounting for half of the world's foreign exchange reserve. China's population, making up 1/4 of the world population, has shaken off poverty, gone beyond the goal of seeking sufficient food and clothing and become well off.

However, the philosophy of the interest-oriented reform is not perfect, and it is hard even to consider its results favorable. The members of a society always occupy different social strata; this is an objective fact. Thus, they have different starting points, identities and statuses, and their performance in pursuing interests certainly differs. Deng Xiaoping especially stressed that becoming rich must be based first on labor and lawful operations. In the reform of Chinese society over the years, there have been cases in which people have become rich through labor and lawful operations, but more than a few cases of becoming rich in other ways have also existed.

For example, obtaining interests through power is the most common and effective way in Chinese society, where the systems are underdeveloped. Thus, those in power wield their power to obtain interests, while those without power also obtain interests by approaching, attaching themselves to and allying themselves with the power sources. The private economy arising out of China's social reform is certainly the most vibrant sector of the market economy and is best able to reflect the nature of that economy; however, such signs of progress are overwhelmed by the rent-seeking behaviors of those in power—"red merchants" and "finding a

mayor rather than a market". They may accumulate wealth, but more may be lost for themselves or for the reform of Chinese society.

The reform was originally designed to stimulate vitality in order to make a cake large enough to be shared by all. This seemed to be the correct approach at first, and it now appears to have been rational and scientific. However, some groups afterwards found that as long as they held the power to distribute, more could be obtained from the original cake through less effort. When interest-seeking behavior perniciously developed to a certain extent, some groups embezzled the interests of other groups, and absurd phenomena occurred: rapid urbanization led to land-lost farmers who remained farmers but without land; rapid urban construction generated rural migrant workers in cities who worked as laborers but remained farmers; and with the rapid reconstruction of old cities, the families whose houses had been demolished relocated to the urban fringe, and with the compensation for the demolition of their homes, they could afford only houses whose area was only half, or even less than 1/10, that of their original houses.

Why did this situation occur? The reform overemphasizes the pursuit of interests and does not take into account the guarantee of rights. We do not oppose the freedom of a group to pursue its own interests, but such pursuit should be allowed only to the extent of not harming the rights of other groups, and especially of not obtaining interests from the rights of other groups. Overstepping to such an extent is illegal, undesirable and unjust.

This problem was not severe in the early stage of the reform because its accumulation entailed a process, and the awareness of rights became prominent as a result of social progress. The reform, over more than 30 years, has changed Chinese society and has resulted in profound changes in the economic system and the social structure and mind-sets as well as profound adjustments in the pattern of interests. The people have become aware of their rights and have started taking action to safeguard them, while technical progress has also provided effective means for safeguarding them. However, institutional arrangements for the reform have not yet been duly made, nor has the deep philosophy of the reform been opportunely followed up, and there are no corresponding systems, organizations or actions for safeguarding these rights. As a result, social conflicts have ensued, including increasing mass incidents, emergencies, confrontations, and even irrational violent incidents.

Defending the reform because of love for it, some people believe that these problems have accompanied the reform because it was not perfect and was not intensified. Actually, such a defense is not necessary. When we put the tremendous achievements of development on the reform's record of merits, we should also record the price and costs. Both great achievements and shocking costs are logically necessary in the choice of such a reform.

The choice of the reform over more than 30 years was inevitable though imperfect. If interests had not been pursued boldly and undisguisedly, it would have been impossible to reverse the state of stagnancy and inflame the people's desire, which had been suppressed for a long time and was even unknown to themselves. Against the background at that time, it was impossible to talk without taking action

and designing a totally beneficial blueprint. Many people believed that they had no choice but to “cross the river by feeling the stones”, as advocated by Deng Xiaoping; however, the author is willing to regard this situation as the result of the selflessness and fearlessness of the members of the Communist Party of China. The people have a different understanding of prices and costs at different times. The price that is partly or even completely unacceptable to us now may have been considered negligible or even been taken for granted in China at that time.

This is the reason that we can neither forget nor deny the reform.

2.2 Reignite the Motivational Power for the Reform

Those involved in China’s reform since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China do not forget the past, and yesterday’s stories cannot be repeated. The vitality that the reform, over more than 30 years, has brought to China cannot be buried in oblivion, but it is necessary to regularize it; the wealth created in China during that time cannot be drained and should be shared.

How to do this? Regardless of intensifying the reform, transforming it or planning future reform based on past reform, it may be described in different ways, but one aspect should be prominent: future reform must fit the social transformation and enable corresponding further transformation, shift the focus from encouraging the pursuit of interest to safeguarding people’s rights, and reignite the motivational power for reform under the precondition of guaranteeing people’s rights.

To safeguard these rights, it is necessary to first recognize them. The sacred and inviolable rights of the citizens must be acknowledged. The rights bestowed on citizens by the Constitution and laws must be recognized. We cannot improperly use national interests and the people’s interests to replace and suppress the legal and basic rights of social groups; in particular, we cannot do so in the interests of a certain group or a certain scope. In a sense, even when we defend the right to reform and develop, we should allow some groups to have the right to not reform and develop. Whether or not it is necessary to reform and develop, we should not rigidly apply one criterion to such matters; instead, we should allow discussion and adopt a wait-and-see attitude. In the information age, it is awkward to attempt to silence people; therefore, we should generously allow extensive debate. Discussions can expose false reforms so that real reform is recognized and practiced.

To safeguard people’s rights, it is also essential to coordinate them. It is easy to talk abstractly about rights, but it is not easy to put them into practice. In the past, rights were stifled by force in some cases; some powerful groups labeled their desires and greed as so-called rights. There are conflicts related to reasonable and legal rights even in realizing the same right among different social groups. In regard to judging which rights should be safeguarded and which groups should be considered in safeguarding them, we cannot take situations for granted and do nothing; we must coordinate different rights at the level of public rights to achieve harmony.

The rights of some powerful and well-organized groups in a society do not necessarily conform to the higher public rights of the whole society, but such groups are often more capable of seeking their rights than the vast majority of people in a society.

To safeguard people's rights, it is necessary to expand them. A right is a historical concept. With social development, the list of rights of the general public is continuously expanded; in other words, as a society progresses, the connotations of the citizens' rights become increasingly rich. Reform must contribute to expanding and defending new rights for citizens while also defending the existing ones. We cannot mitigate and ignore rights in the name of rights.

When such a philosophy of reform becomes the choice of reform, a new vision will emerge in the reforms in various fields within Chinese society:

Transformation of the economic reform.

In improving the socialist market economic system, we will no longer merely work on the institutional design of minor details but will focus on consolidating the foundation for the system; for example, by cultivating the equality of market players and guaranteeing a fair environment for competition. The economic policy will stress not only growth but also adjustment of the structure, expansion of the domestic demand and transformation of the market mode. Economic development will no longer be pursued only for the sake of development but will put the people first and benefit the people with more emphasis on the actual situation of their livelihood.

Transformation of the reform of the government.

Breakthroughs will be made in the transformation of government functions and in the reform of the system of administrative management. The government is no longer oriented towards economic construction. We no longer should encourage, or even allow, the government to make a headlong rush on the economic front to "gather up the land of others while leaving its own land uncultivated". Micro-economic development should be fostered by the market players. In addition to proper regulation and necessary supervision, the government should also make more efforts in social management and public services, for example, by reforming the system of employment management to expand employment; by reforming the system of distribution to increase the proportion of labor income in the distribution of income; by reforming the educational, medical and social security systems to improve the quality and standard of living; and by reforming self-construction to enhance administrative execution and efficiency. All of these reforms will be gradually intensified.

Transformation of the reform of the political system to a certain extent.

The reform of the political system is closely related to the reform of the economic system. With the transformation and intensification of the reform of the economic system, it is imperative to press ahead with the corresponding reform of the political system. Subject to the general goal of developing socialist democratic politics,

further progress will be made in the following aspects of institutional, standardized and procedural reforms: the positioning of the political parties in grasping the overall situation and coordinating the various parties; the manner of orderly political participation by citizens; real expression of the authority of the Constitution and laws; and expansion and deepening of the autonomy of grassroots democracy.

2.3 Identify the Possibility of Transforming the Reform and Achieve It

Will such an outlook for China's future reform be a one-sided wish or a theoretical utopia?

Our answer is no. Three factors support this judgment:

First, reform self-consciousness. The absence of a good reform in practice does not amount to the absence of a desire for and pursuit of a better reform. We cannot underestimate the sincerity regarding the reform, firm determination in faith and affection for Chinese society of the core leadership of China's reform—the Communist Party of China—nor can we underestimate the expectations of the Chinese people for a better life, a more harmonious society and more scientific development. It is possible that all this and a keen awareness of and reflections on the reform within Chinese society over more than 30 years will give rise to a new reform consensus and new reform choices. Based on historical experience, when everyone desires to accomplish a goal, that goal can be successfully achieved.

Second, social pressure. A behavioral pattern will not automatically disappear from the historical arena unless this pattern no longer works or is no longer easy to practice. When more and more people whose houses have been demolished fight for their rights without fear of death, can urbanization continue? When there are increasing cases in which BMW becomes a symbol of immorality, even evil, because of dishonest practices, can the wealth accumulation of people such as its owners be continued? Some people worry that the groups that have gained supernormal interests in the existing reform process will not be reconciled to forgoing the existing reform mode. This is a fact. More importantly, these groups are not stupid; while they will not desire such a change, they will choose the lesser of two evils: on the one hand, there is an excess of interests, but numerous minefields exist; on the other hand, interests are equal but can be retained in a safe and sustained way. With regard to the path to follow, they will choose correctly. Therefore, when the existing reform becomes stagnant and induces troubles amidst increasing social pressure, the foundation for the choice of an emergent new reform will have been laid.

Third, catalysis of the crisis. Many people are afraid of a crisis and are reluctant to face it. In reality, a crisis can expose contradictions, mitigate the unreasonable desires of some social groups, and compel us to make new choices of reforms to

solve the problems. History shows that much of the progress in Chinese society has been driven by crises. The SARS crisis in 2003 opened the chapter of open and transparent political operations in China. The incident of Sun Zhigang, a young man who was beaten to death in 2003 after he was improperly housed by the system designed to house homeless people, led to the abolishment of the housing management regulations that had been in force for several decades. The current global financial crisis has made us realize that the existing economic operational mode is problematic, and innovations and breakthroughs must be made in the micro-economic institutional framework along with even more extensive and deeper institutional arrangements. If this financial crisis is properly addressed, it is possible that it will become the catalyst for the transformation of China's reform.

Finally, the transformation of the reform from the pursuit of interests to the safeguarding of rights does not mean that the fundamental role of interests in social development has been denied. In fact, the safeguarding of rights is a realization at a higher level based on the pursuit of interests, or rights are interests to the extent that the connotations of such interests are richer and more comprehensive.

This is the reason that reform in Chinese society remains consistent, although it is transforming.

3 Establish a Scientific Outlook on Reform

We should develop a scientific outlook on reform and opening up during a further promotion of these ideas. The great practice of reform and opening up over more than 30 years has qualified us to summarize and foster a scientific outlook. Some problems arising out of the reform and opening up over more than 30 years also prompt and require us to persist in developing them.

We may further explore the connotations of a scientific reform and opening up and the issues thus addressed. However, the following aspects are indispensable, and the issues are also unavoidable.

3.1 The Orientation of the Value of the Reform Should be Scientific, and the Reform Must be People-Oriented

The reform is not and cannot be the purpose. The reformers cannot enjoy immunity to reform because they are reformers. Our reform is designed only to serve the people's interests. Our reformers have only one mission—to carry out the reform by following the people's will. In this sense, the 1.3 billion Chinese people are absolutely not an abstract political concept. Therefore, Deng Xiaoping repeatedly emphasized that China's reform should solve the problem of poverty for 1 billion people and address developmental issues involving 1 billion people. The reform

should always focus on the overwhelming majority of the people rather than on particular groups and a minority of the people.

To reform in favor of the people, we must regard their support, approval, happiness and agreement as the starting point and the destination for reform. It is necessary to ensure that the people become the supporters and the undertakers of the development of the reform, that they own and enjoy the achievements of that development, and that they fully own and enjoy the interests that they should and can obtain. Deng Xiaoping once specified a famous criterion known as the “Three Favorables” for judging and measuring the success of various kinds of political work: whether it is favorable to develop the productive forces in the socialist society, whether it is favorable to enhance the comprehensive national strength of the socialist country and whether it is favorable to raise the people’s living standard. This criterion ultimately aims to achieve an orientation towards values: whether it is favorable to raise the people’s living standard. “Making the developmental achievements benefit all of the people”, as repeatedly emphasized by the Communist Party of China, reflects such an orientation.

To reform in favor of the people, we should listen to their voice at all times and know their sentiments. Deng Xiaoping once noted: “The people have considerable dissenting opinions about life; we should not consider them cynical remarks”, and “the people have complaints; we should listen to and respond to their complaints.”¹⁴ These remarks have particular guiding significance in the current crucial period of reform and development. Regarding the dissenting opinions and complaints of the people, as long as we discover the root cause and sincerely solve the problems, we will make breakthroughs in reform and development.

3.2 The Positioning of the Main Reform Participants Should be Scientific and the Reform Must be Carried Out by the People

Who are the main reform participants? They are the people. For the members of the Communist Party of China, this issue does not need to be discussed because it is equivalent to a generally acknowledged truth in natural science. It is described as such in the theory and practice of the Party. In the late 1970s, 21 farmers at Xiaogang Village, Fengyang County, Anhui Province jointly adopted the system for the responsibility of the household contract, kicking off China’s reform. Deng Xiaoping praised them as follows: “The system of responsibility for the rural household contract was invented by farmers. Many good things in the rural reform were created at the grassroots level, and we took and processed them as the guide at the national level.” “Many things in the reform came from the people’s practice.”¹⁵

¹⁴*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 27.

¹⁵*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 382.

Farmers were the real main participants in this rural reform, so the rural reform advanced swiftly and smoothly and yielded notable results. Over several years, it fundamentally solved the problem concerning sufficient food and clothing for farmers. In this process, unprecedented play was given to the initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of the farmers, and the Party gathered valuable experience for its next reform. Only when the initiative and enthusiasm of the main reform participants are fully mobilized to ensure that they accept and consciously participate in the reform can the reform be smoothly pushed forward.

We also must note that in some subsequent specific reform processes, the main reform participants became increasingly vague; the voice of the people became weaker; and the setting of the reform goals, design of the reform plan and introduction of the reform measures were affected by scholarly criticism elites and small circles of people. We cannot deny the objective necessity of practices such as downsizing for efficiency or restructuring, but we have reason to question whether the specific actions in realizing these goals took into account the immediate and long-term interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. On the one hand, the reform led to tens of thousands of laid-off workers and land-lost farmers; on the other hand, nearly 10 million millionaires and more than 1 million multimillionaires and billionaires emerged in a very short time. We must ask: Who led the reform? Would the people be fired by themselves? Would the people abandon the land on which their life was based?

If the reform is controlled by merely a small number of people, or only a few “able persons” and “elites” participate in the process, it is neither democratic nor fair, the results will benefit only a few people, and it will be disdained and questioned. Such reform cannot but lead to polarization of the rich and the poor and to conflicts among the people; consequently, there will be increasing confrontations among government officials, the elites and the people, and the relationship of trust between the Party and the people will be destroyed, undermining our foundation for governance.

In contemporary China, the main reform participants cannot be anyone but the overwhelming majority of the people. The people are the main creators of the advanced productive forces and advanced culture and the promoters of the coordinated development of socialist, material, political and spiritual civilizations. The people are also the fundamental force for realizing their own interests by quickening and deepening the reforms. Deng Xiaoping stated: “I believe that all of the things that accord with the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and are supported by the people will be bound to be successful, no matter how arduous the road ahead is.”¹⁶ Only when the people really become the main participants can our reform be intensified and improved. If actual breakthroughs occur, our reform will get on the right track.

¹⁶*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

3.3 The Reform's Line of Thought Should be Scientific, and the Reform Should be Based on Dialectical Thought

We should not refrain from reflecting on and questioning the reform. When we realize that some of its actions are not regular, scientific and proper, it is a good opportunity to intensify, improve and push forward the reform. We should not merely emphasize one or two possible choices; instead, we should develop a scientific line of thought about the choices related to efficiency and equity in the reform, as mentioned earlier.

With rapid social development and the gradual enhancement of the people's awareness of politics and rights, the excessive wealth gap will not only fail to generate efficiency but will also result in economic stagnation and even in social conflict. We must attach great importance to this situation. We should make the "cake" larger and fairly distribute it through the reform.

Karl Marx said: "A house, no matter how small, can meet all the housing needs of the society when the surrounding houses are as small as it is; however, once a tall building is built near this house, it becomes a cottage, so small that its owner cannot be particular about it or can have only a very low regard for it; furthermore, regardless of the size of the small house, it will expand with the progress of civilization. As long as the nearby building expands to the same or greater extent, the occupant of the smaller house will become increasingly uncomfortable, unsatisfied and constrained within its walls".¹⁷ He said the reason such a psychological feeling occurs is that our needs and enjoyment are caused by society; therefore, our measure of needs and enjoyment is based on society rather than on the materials that satisfy them. Our needs and enjoyment are of a social nature, so they are relative.¹⁸ For the vast majority of the people, the increment of interest deriving from the reform and opening up is similar to a small house; though the reform gradually improves, it is never comparable to the building of the vested interest groups. If this situation is not changed for a long time, the resulting discomfort, dissatisfaction and constraint will directly cause a legitimate political crisis.

A scientific reform does not cast doubt on the pursuit of efficiency, while the result obtained in recent years from the slogan "giving priority to efficiency" has been questioned. Given the characteristics of the stage of development of contemporary China, we can see that in the stage of building a harmonious society, the statuses of and relationship between efficiency and equity have changed. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping said with regard to the wealth gap that we should study the time and foundation for saliently posing and solving this problem; we can envision that we will saliently pose and solve it when we have become well off by the end of this century. As time passes, the rule should be changed. Placing greater emphasis on

¹⁷Marx and Engels (1995, p. 349).

¹⁸Ibid.

social equity is the only choice for practically achieving efficiency in China during a period of sharp contradictions. Only in this way can we obtain real efficiency and achieve fast and sound development.

3.4 The Choice of the Path Towards Reform Should be Scientific, and the Reform Should be Carried Out in a Standardized and Thorough Way

The relationship between the path towards reform and reform itself should be dialectically treated. We should not deny the reform goals and direction because the reform requires some concrete behaviors. Likewise, we should not ignore or dodge some problems in the specific path and behaviors of the reform because it is believed that the goals and direction are correct.

Establishing a socialist market economic system and practicing a socialist market economy is the general direction of our reform. This goal is absolutely unshakable and unquestionable. We should unswervingly keep to this direction and further maintain a strong determination and confidence in the reform in order to continuously improve the socialist market economic system and give full play to the fundamental role of the market in resource allocation while strengthening and improving macro-regulation and guaranteeing rapid and sound economic and social development. The current problem is that many of our paths towards reform are half accomplished, contain false factors, and are not new in substance or thorough and standardized. On the one hand, the market-oriented allocation of resources is viewed as a shortcut for realizing power in the name of the marketization of resource allocation; on the other hand, the responsibility and obligation to provide public services are shirked under the pretext of a market-oriented allocation of resources.

Moreover, attention should be paid to improving the scientificity of the reform's decision-making process and enhancing the coordination of the reform measures so that the reform takes into account the interests and concerns of the various parties and is really supported by the people. Not only practices from before the reform but also some practices within it must be reformed. We should follow the requirements for intensifying, improving and promoting the reform to consciously correct practices that are not standardized or scientific and are improper. This is the attitude that should and must be adopted in guaranteeing further reform and opening up in China.

3.5 Gather the Positive Energy of the Reform

To implement the decisions made during the Third Plenary of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee of the

Communist Party of China has established the leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform; similar leading groups are being created in provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and the relevant ministries. At the new stage of China's reform, establishing the leading group is of great significance for giving better play to the core leadership of the Party in grasping the overall situation, coordinating various parties and ensuring that the reform is smoothly pushed forward and that its tasks are carried out. In particular, strengthening the responsibility for reform, conducting top-level reform design and disrupting the solidification of the reform interests are actions that have been greatly anticipated in Chinese society.

3.6 In Accelerating the Reform in a Constant Way, Responsibilities Should Be Assumed

Reform and opening up represent a new great revolution; our Party leads the people to carry it out under the new historical conditions. This great revolution has lasted for an extraordinary period of 37 years since the Third Plenary of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. However, we should also note that as the reform dividend has been shared, some social groups have been content with the initial achievements and have no desire to advance further; as the reform has entered the deepwater areas and the crucial period, fear of difficulties and pessimism have loomed large among these groups. Therefore, enthusiasm for the reform has declined, the motivational power for it has worn away and reform actions have weakened.

However, reform and opening up are the sources of vitality for the development and progress of contemporary China; they are the important weapons supporting the cause of the Party and urging the people to keep abreast of the times and are the inevitable way to sustain and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping repeatedly emphasized that reform and opening have no ending; the reform cannot rely merely on slogans, and we should ensure that it does not stop. We should reshape the responsible party for China's reform and its responsibilities, and establishing the leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform is exactly such an institutional arrangement. Therefore, as mentioned by General Secretary Xi Jinping, the primary task of the leading group for the reform is to quicken China's reform in a stable, consistent way.

China's reform must be accelerated. As a Chinese saying goes, a boat in the current will go back if it does not advance. At present, China's reform is at such a historical node. Our reform has unfolded on various fronts, its costs have sunk, and various contradictions and pressures have resulted in a strong forcing mechanism. Against such a background, the reform cannot be stopped, and decelerating it would cause horrendous waste and even great problems. General Secretary Xi Jinping said: "Prudence should be exercised, repeated research and studies of feasibility

should be conducted before the reform measures are put forward; however, we should not be timid and overcautious, nor should we hesitate to move forward or be afraid to take action and make attempts.”¹⁹ Therefore, China’s reform cannot be stopped and should be propelled forward quickly; once we clearly identify the necessary actions, we should be politically courageous to steadfastly put them into practice. Meanwhile, China’s reform cannot be executed by a small number of people but should be carried forward by various groups within the whole society; the leading group should accelerate China’s reform and shoulder the heavy responsibility for pushing it forward.

The rhythm of China’s reform should be steady. In the final analysis, the reform is a change in existing systems and institutions and a breakthrough in existing interest patterns and status; the reform turns bad aspects into better ones, inefficient aspects into more efficient ones, and unsatisfactory aspects into more satisfactory ones. Of course, all this is based on focusing on the whole society and the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, starting from and aiming for the people’s happiness and satisfaction. However, in recent years, a phenomenon has existed of some people and groups conducting the so-called “reforms” in the interests of their own small circles and groups under the pretext of carrying out the reform. These “reforms” have affected the overall arrangement of China’s reform, disturbed its overall rhythm, and even severely damaged its image among the people. During the reform, it is necessary to dare to think and do as well as to blaze new trails; as mentioned by General Secretary Xi Jinping, “as long as full feasibility studies and evaluation have been carried out, the actions which conform to reality must be taken and shall be taken in a bold way”;²⁰ however, we should avoid self-inflicted setbacks. Based on our experience and lessons learned, sometimes the costs of irresponsible reform actions are so huge and the difficulties caused by these actions are so severe that they exceed those of the reform itself.

From a broader perspective, the connotation of being steady is richer. To be steady, it is necessary to first be correct. We should correctly push forward the reform, maintain the correct direction and stand for it, and persist in self-improvement and the development of the socialist system; we cannot move in the opposite direction and make disruptive mistakes. We should accurately promote the reform and carefully execute the requirements of the central leadership; we should not blindly go ahead before understanding the requirements. To be steady, it is also necessary to be orderly—we should propel the reform forward in an orderly manner, and we should not jump the gun when a unified arrangement should be made by the central leadership; we should not be indecisive and laggard when actions should be taken as early as possible; we should not hastily carry out programs that should be implemented on a pilot basis; we should not be anxious to obtain quick results when in-depth research is needed before actions can be taken; and we should not move forward in advance of legal authorizations when they

¹⁹Xi (2013).

²⁰Ibid.

should be obtained. Only in this way can China's reform be promoted in a step-by-step manner, many small victories add up to a big one, and a journey of a thousand miles be completed one step at a time.

3.7 In Comprehensive Intensification, Overall Arrangements Should be Made Within the Reform

For 37 years, social transformation has been promoted in China. In the future, the changing society will push forward the transformation of the reform in China. Reform measures that were common and feasible in the past may no longer work and may even produce adverse effects. The reform in Chinese society should be changed from a one-sided to a comprehensive one, be intensified from a peripheral cut, and be self-innovated based on borrowism.

Comprehensively intensifying the reform requires a complicated systematic engineering process; in this process, if one specific department is or several departments are relied on, the attempt will fail in most cases. This situation calls for establishing a higher-level leadership mechanism for coordination, overall arrangements and top-level design. This is also the most important task for the leading group in comprehensively intensifying the reform.

The overall arrangements should focus on both key points and extensive aspects, both at the present time and in the long term. The overall arrangements should address major relationships and highlight strategies, battle and combat issues, policies, plans, forces and progress. When delivering an important speech during the special workshops designed for the leading cadres at the provincial and ministerial levels to learn and carry out the decisions made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and to comprehensively intensify the reform, General Secretary Xi Jinping noted: "We should figure out the relationships between the overall policy arrangement and a certain specific policy, between the systematic policy chain and a certain policy segment, between top-level policy design and the hierarchical connections of the policies, between policy unity and policy difference, between long-term policies and interim policies; we should neither replace the whole with parts nor replace parts with the whole; we should not pursue flexibility at the expense of principles and let the principles restrict the flexibility." These major relationships must be properly handled by the leading group for reform during the overall arrangement of that reform.

Of course, to really create a good overall arrangement, the top-level design of the reform is a basic task. The leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform should strengthen the top-level design and overall planning and intensify the research on the relevance, orderliness and feasibility of the reforms. As a Chinese saying goes, if one fails to adopt an overall perspective, one cannot achieve success at the local level. The reforms in the fields of economic, political, cultural, social and ecological civilization are closely related to and interact with the Party buildup

and reform. The reform in any field involves other fields and must be coordinated with reforms in those other fields. If there is no coordination among the reforms in various fields, the reform measures will restrict each other. It is very difficult to comprehensively intensify the reform if it can barely be promoted, and the effects will be greatly compromised. It is necessary to look forward, think ahead and make arrangements in advance. Only such top-level design can truly conform to the developmental requirements of the Party and the people's cause. The top-level design includes an overall arrangement and specific plans. For the leading group of the reform, an overall arrangement for comprehensively intensifying it is available—the strategic arrangement made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Now there is an urgent need to introduce implementation plans through which the reform measures can be carried out. The central leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform has six special subgroups for the reform of the economic and ecological civilization system, the reform of the democratic and legal system, the reform of the cultural system, the reform of the social system, the reform of the Party buildup system and the reform of the discipline inspection system. It is essential to develop scientific, standardized and feasible plans for these six aspects before anything else.

However, the top-level design should not be understood as a schematic design. With respect to the top-level design, we cannot formulate a so-called final package plan behind closed doors in offices and meeting rooms and then issue official documents outlining a reform plan to be followed at localities nationwide because big problems would arise, and mistakes would be made. In particular, reform plans proposed by some people are copied either from textbooks or from foreign countries, in which case the design is greatly divergent from the reform reality in China and may drag China's reform down the wrong path.

Our reform from a planned economy to a market economy has been intensely put into practice, and any "plan" for this process would be fruitless. The most miraculous and awe-inspiring aspect of a market economy is that the market players with different intentions obtain their desired results through spontaneous competition and coordination. We cannot use the idea of "planning" to practice the "market" and adopt the means of the planned economy to conduct the reform of the market economy. We cannot retreat to the original road after reforming for more than 30 years. Worshipping the so-called perfect, detached and mature reform plan is nothing but a typical planning idea. Attempts to count on a plan to cover every part of the whole process of reform will backfire and be fruitless.

Based on the history of China's reform, the really viable reform strategy and reliable systems came from the actual conditions rather than from an office; for example, the system of responsibility for the household contract in China's rural reform was developed in the field at Xiaogang Village, and the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone grew from a small fishing village near the South China Sea into an international metropolis because of bold attempts and actions instead of planning behind the closed doors of a meeting room. This is the reason that General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that there is a dialectical unity between "crossing the river by feeling the stones" and the strengthening of the top-level design. Local

staged reform and opening up promoted by the Party should be carried out under the premise of reinforcing the top-level design, while the top-level design should be planned on the basis of pressing ahead with local staged reform and opening up.

3.8 In Tackling Difficulties, Authority is Needed for the Reform

China needs reform, and China's reform is very difficult. What are the difficulties? A consensus that some vested interest groups are hindering the reform is becoming increasingly clear. Only when this interest fence is broken down can real breakthroughs and a new vision become reality in the reform of Chinese society. However, this is not easy because perhaps this obstacle comes from ourselves.

When making explanatory comments regarding the decisions made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping said that the obstacles to the reform often arose within rather than outside the system. This remark is of great significance. In the more than 30 years of reform, some Party members and cadres have dared to be the first to make reform decisions, push forward, and participate in and practice the reform. All this is true. However, in this process, gaining special advantages in favorable positions was unavoidable, and the interests obtained by the people in the favorable positions were much greater than those to which the ordinary people gained access. As this pattern has been ingrained for many years, the people have become accustomed to it and have little consciousness of it. However, it is obvious that this pattern is unfair, unjust and unsustainable. As mentioned by Premier Li Keqiang, moving interests is more difficult than touching the soul. To break such a pattern, if there is no authoritative, relatively detached body above the interested parties, it is hard to discern the crux of the problem in which various interests have been fixed and to identify the direction and point of action from which to make breakthroughs and introduce creative reform measures. This is the purpose of the central leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform, in which Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Chinese President, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission serves as the head and three members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Premier Li Keqiang, Liu Yunshan and Zhang Gaoli, serve as the deputy heads. The leading groups for the reform in provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and the relevant ministries are similarly commanded by people who are chiefly in charge of the Party and the government; the departments at lower levels follow the actions of those at higher levels to achieve a certain consistency and strict enforcement of orders and prohibitions.

With such authority, the leading group for comprehensively intensifying the reform can go beyond the rigid conventions and overcome the constraints of departmental interests; study the overall, fundamental and long-term interests of the

country; introduce reform measures; and establish reform arrangements. It can strongly correct the tendency of the people in some localities and in some groups to accept the reform measures suited to them and reject those unsuited to them, and it can fundamentally overcome the mind-sets that hamper reform and development. Finally, the fence around interests is not abstract. For China, this fence is closely related to the existing work pattern, departmental system and operational mode. To break down that fence, it is necessary to act to change these aspects. According to the remarks made by General Secretary Xi Jinping, in carrying out the reform, it is impossible to achieve breakthroughs under the existing work pattern and institutional operation. This means that departmental integration, rule adjustment, and personnel entry and exit are unavoidable issues for the leading group to comprehensively intensify the reform, and addressing these issues can lay a solid foundation for further reform.

4 China's Path in the Reform of the Political System

For contemporary Chinese society, the issue is not whether the political system must be changed; the economic and social changes are certainly coordinated with political development. The issue is not whether there is a desire to change; attaching importance to carving out a way for the reform of the economic system through the reform of the political system is the consistent stance and attitude of the Communist Party of China. This consideration has been clearly shown in the reports delivered in the Party's meetings since the reform began. Although there have been many debates regarding the reform of China's political system, the real issue has always been how to consolidate and improve the basic political system of Chinese society through reform while effectively removing inopportune, uncivilized and unprogressive systems and institutions attached to the basic institutional body. However, this task is not easy to accomplish. China's path towards the reform of the political system must be carved out in Chinese society by pushing forward its own reform and providing the proof of its legality.

4.1 Changes in the Economic Foundation and Progress in the Superstructure

With respect to institutional reform, the Communist Party of China adheres to the philosophy of adapting the superstructure to the development and changes of the economic foundation. This is the most basic view of social development in the historical materialism of Marxist philosophy. To practice this requirement during social development, it is necessary to accurately judge the changes in the economic foundation of Chinese society, objectively evaluate whether the superstructure is

adapted to the economic foundation, carefully clarify the complicated relationship between the economic foundation and the superstructure in society, and then constructively pinpoint the possible path towards changing the superstructure.

4.1.1 Changes in the Economic Foundation

The economic foundation of a society refers mainly to the relationship of production, the manner of production and the economic operational mode. Over more than 30 years of development, the economic foundation of Chinese society has fundamentally changed in the following aspects:

- The form of production means that ownership has changed. Before the reform and opening up, Chinese society was dominated by socialist public ownership, with ownership by the entire population and collective ownership as the main forms. Other forms of ownership existed in name only, even if they did not exist after the socialist transformation. Even if there were some non-public remnants, they no longer had the nature and status of ownership. However, since the 1980s, the non-public economy of Chinese society has reemerged as individually and privately owned businesses, and their status has rapidly risen from “a necessary supplement” to “an important part”; the system of “keeping public ownership as the mainstay of the economy and allowing diverse forms of ownership to develop side by side” was adopted as the basic economic system at the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and the goal of “unswervingly encouraging, supporting and guiding the non-public sectors of the economy to develop” was set during the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. A mixed ownership economy based on the modern system of property rights has become increasingly common, and the proportion of the non-public economy across the country has been close to 50%; it has been 2/3 and even higher in some provinces in eastern China.
- The social economic operational mode has changed. Before the reform and opening up, in Chinese society, the planned economy dominated all economic operations, and, as in an extensive and all-inclusive network, the planning of the central government covered all the micro-economic units. There were no real entrepreneurs: the director of a factory was actually a workshop director—if he or she required workers to produce screws, the workers could not produce screw caps; and farmers were organized by the people's commune—if the people's commune required farmers to grow corn, they could not grow wheat. Since the reform, China has been under a planned commodity economy, a dual system and a socialist commodity economy; the market economy was justifiably placed on China's economic stage by the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, after which the market played a fundamental role in resource allocation under the national macro-regulations. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China identified the decisive role of the market in resource allocation; such production factors as

capital, labor and technology have also played increasingly active roles, and a modern market system has gradually taken shape. In some respects, excessive marketization has even occurred.

- The form of social distribution has changed. Before the reform and opening up, work-based distribution was the only legal form of distribution in Chinese society; in this form of distribution, the relationship among people was an equal relationship based on labor, and the idea that “there was more pay for more work and those who did not work could not eat” was taken for granted in the socialist society; other arrangements were considered exploitation. However, since the reform, the system has changed—not only labor but also such production factors as capital, technology and management can be involved in distribution based on their contributions, and a system in which work-based distribution remains dominant but diverse forms of distribution coexist has become the basic system of distribution. At some times and on some occasions, the proportion of labor in distribution has gradually decreased, even though it has been difficult to guarantee the minimum wage system.

The economic foundation can carve out a road for the superstructure’s development. “As the economic foundation changes, the whole huge superstructure will quickly or slowly change.” This is the basic view of Marxism and the basic law that governs social development. Of course, the superstructure of Chinese society should change with the changes in its economic foundation.

4.1.2 Adaptation and Inadaptation of the Superstructure

The superstructure refers to the institutional contents based on the economy, including politics, laws and ideology. Compared with the great changes in the economic foundation of Chinese society, there is much inadaptation of the superstructure, though the superstructure cannot be considered a slowly changing and underdeveloped one. Such inadaptation is reflected in the following aspects of social development:

- The cases in which power oversteps its specified scope are not restricted. Against the background of a market economy, power must be defined by the boundary within which some actions should not be taken and other actions must be taken. However, in reality, power still overrides all other factors. As power is misplaced, the government does not provide public services and becomes obsessed with the GDP; it takes steps only to attract investment while ignoring other aspects, and it straightforwardly pursues economic buildup in pursuit of money by competing with the people. Power is wielded at will. The departments in power flaunt their power through increasing the items subject to examination and verification; if there are items that cannot be subject to examination and verification, they conduct appraisals according to the so-called criteria in disguise. Power overshadows laws—the market economy is an economy under the

rule of law; more and more laws have been enacted, but they often give way to official documents. Department leaders even write instructions and secretaries replace judges in lawsuits.

- Rights are disregarded and not guaranteed. The superstructure is severely lacking in ways to guarantee equal rights to the various players in a market economy. The rights that should be guaranteed are not, and the market players must find their own solutions to guarantee their rights; for example, the right to equal operations based on the requirements of the market economy is not available to entrepreneurs, so they must seek compensation in non-economic fields; private entrepreneurs must curry favor with mayors rather than seek opportunities within the market and even scramble for the position of mayor rather than fawning on mayors. The entrepreneurs do not care about the economic operation but instead pay attention to the political background and always seek a political affiliation. Moreover, the pursuit of rights sometimes evolves into the “winner-take-all” approach and the Matthew Effect. The rights of workers are overlooked while the influence of power excessively swells, and the social gap in wealth has developed to a staggering extent. On the one hand, thousands of houses are taken as investment goods; they are even hoarded for speculation and left unused; on the other hand, the ordinary people helplessly struggle with soaring housing prices.
- Ideology is increasingly waning. The social existence of the people determines their consciousness. Diverse forms of ownership and a changing market economy have resulted in a situation in which independence, selectivity and differences in the thoughts of the general public are significantly enhanced, and ideological diversity and changes are the result. However, the mainstream ideology is ill prepared in terms of being fundamentally unshakable and flexible in adapting to change; the ideas that must be retained cannot be given the vivid forms of the times, while those that must be opposed are not criticized. As a result, rigidity and silence arise when management has been exercised, and no effective actions are taken and a value vacuum occurs when no management has been exercised.

We believe that the superstructure has not completely failed to adapt to the economic foundation, and this belief is not objective. In recent years, Chinese society has rapidly developed and the economic foundation has changed profoundly; if there has been no progress and coordination from the superstructure, such changes are unimaginable.

4.1.3 Possibility of Adaptation, Difficulties and Ways of Realization

It is less problematic to believe that the changes in the superstructure have failed to keep a timely pace with the changes in the economic foundation. After all, the

changes in the superstructure lag to a certain extent and will eventually catch up with the changes in the economic foundation. The problem is that in the current Chinese society, the effect of the superstructure on the economic foundation backfires. As the institutional inertia of the superstructure forms an “alliance” with the unhealthy elements of the new economic foundation, both the economic foundation and the superstructure mutate. This effect is particularly typical during the establishment of a socialist market economic system.

The adoption of a socialist market economic system brought much hope to Chinese society. People believed that “socialist” was a crucial touch added to “market economy” so that the good things of the market economy could be introduced and some of its inherent defects could be avoided. However, in the 20-year-plus practice of the market economic system, that hope has not become reality, and power-for-money deals even occurred at many levels; as mentioned by an economist, crony capitalism emerged. The departments and people in power wielded power to gain undue interests from the market and shirked their responsibilities to provide social security and public services under the pretext of meeting the demands of the market economy. The market players did not engage in fair competition in economic activities through the market; on the contrary, they obtained excess non-market profits through rent-seeking behavior. This phenomenon in the economic field even entered the social and political fields, where power was in alliance with money. There were dealings between politics and economy. There was no mobility in the social structure or among social strata. The children of officials continued to be officials and those of rich families remained rich, while the later generations of ordinary families were not able to afford a cup of coffee even after relentless efforts for 18 years. Currently, university graduates find jobs because of their special background, social connections and parents instead of their ability, and university graduates from ordinary families cannot find employment after graduation.

We should not dodge these questions from the general public. The complicated relationship between the economic foundation and the superstructure is much more problematic than we had been aware of until recently.

Therefore, at present, the key to solving China’s social problems lies in the adaptation of its superstructure, and such an adaptation is not an alliance. To be worthy of the name in practice, we should first provide a clear theoretical explanation—the superstructure of Chinese society should produce an accelerating effect in the direction of developing an economic foundation, and promoting the development of the productive social forces should be its fundamental mission. In addition, given the nature of a socialist society, the superstructure of Chinese society should play a larger role in elevating socialism to a higher stage and achieving social equality and justice. When this has been achieved, the superstructure of Chinese society will be able to adapt to the changes in and development of its economic foundation.

4.2 *Four Driving Forces for the Reform of the Political System*

When there was much debate on the reform of China's political system, the reform of the political system of Chinese society was quietly advancing by virtue of its own forces. We paid attention to, cared about and guided those forces. Their significance and value for a rapid and healthy political reform of Chinese society greatly outweighed the unintelligible teachings and tongue-in-cheek compliments.

4.2.1 Stratum Differentiation Lays a Cornerstone for Democracy

Democracy is the most important goal of the political reform. It is very often confused with the political reform. Although different groups have different understandings of democracy, and sometimes their definitions differ greatly, this does not hinder discussions of democracy from their perspectives. However, does the democracy of Chinese society really progress amidst such discussions? The answers from different sources may not be completely the same. Over the years, and even over a long period, the pursuit of democracy by the general public and government officials was uninterrupted in Chinese society. It is uncomfortable for us not to find the word "democracy" in politicians' speeches.

However, the process of democracy in Chinese society has not been as rapid, good and sufficient as we anticipated. Is Chinese society less sincere? The answer is no.

The appearance and expansion of democracy are subject to conditions that require a social foundation. When there is no social foundation, democracy is available only in speeches. The social foundation for democracy is the differentiation of the social strata and prominence of the awareness of the strata.

The social structure of traditional China is "two classes and one stratum"—the working class, peasant class and intellectual stratum; intellectuals are part of the working class, so China's social groups actually involve two classes. No other social group is politically recognized. Against the background of a planned economy, both classes basically share the same interests, and a policy beneficial for both classes is favorable for the whole Party. As long as the governing party duly protects and realizes the interests of both classes, it can win support from the whole society. Therefore, in a uniform society, solidarity is the theme and unity is the keynote. The unitary social structure lacks a scope and place for democracy.

Some people do not understand that the Communist Party of China "masters affairs for the people", but that function was strongly supported by the people in the past. Many believe that the Chinese people have no "personality". In fact, against the background of that social structure, "mastering affairs for the people" is much the same as "letting the people master affairs"; even if there is a difference, it is small.

However, in modern society, that difference is great.

Over the years, in Chinese society, the social structure has changed, and new social strata and interest groups have emerged. Different social strata and interest groups have different ways of obtaining their interests, and these ways are not necessarily confrontational and are also not completely consistent and complementary. In many cases, a certain interest of a certain group is achieved at the expense of an interest of other groups. In these cases, it is theoretically feasible for one body to represent everyone and a master to arrange the allocation of interests, but that approach is unrealistic. Even if there is a sincere desire to “master the affairs for the people” without distracting thoughts, the ability and climate to do so no longer exist, so “letting the people master the affairs” is the only option.

Therefore, different strata and groups express their own interest appeals for consultation, trading, interaction and bargaining, and choices made by the majority are accepted on the basis of respecting the minority, so democracy appears and grows. Even if there is a master, that master must dedicate much time and energy to pooling wisdom from various strata against the background of such a social structure. The consultations required to pool wisdom are a process in which democracy plays a role.

Therefore, today’s democratic process in Chinese society keeps in step with and coordinates with the differentiation of the strata in Chinese society. Social differentiation becomes increasingly profound and democratic, and development of democracy is a result.

4.2.2 Scientific and Technological Progress Ensures that Power is No Longer Monopolized

The fact that power is not subject to restrictions is much criticized in Chinese society and is the primary obstacle that must be removed in the political reform.

Power is not subject to restrictions because the people in power are unwilling to be restricted, and there is no realistic power that can serve as a counterweight.

The people in power obtain excess, unjust and undue interests for themselves. They manipulate power behind the scenes and use it to gain interests through hidden rules, a system that they consider very beneficial. China is in a period of social transformation, so many institutions are void and disorderly, leaving room for unscrupulous abuses of power.

However, in recent years, as some power has been recklessly wielded, a trend has secretly grown and developed: some people in power have complained that it has been increasingly hard to exercise their power as officials, and some abuses of power have been restrained to some extent.

Have the people in power been moved by their consciences to take the initiative in restricting that power and exercising self-restraint? We hope so, but this suggestion is not the truth.

What is the truth? The truth is that they must do this due to the Internet—the crystallization of modern scientific and technological progress.

In previous times, it was easy to cover up abuses of power for personal gain and even violations of laws, regulations and principles. Even if these acts were divulged, the news of them would not be extensively disseminated; only a small number of people would know, and as time passed, they would end up with no definite information.

However, in the information age, the Internet can extensively publicize such acts.

On the Internet, spatial and temporal boundaries no longer exist, and status, identity and social strata are no longer meaningful; events near and remote, people in power and powerless people can be readily available on the same platform. Information can be easily obtained and quickly disseminated. A post on the Internet can be instantly accessible to billions of people.

Some time ago, the president of a local court wielded his power to secure a job at the court for his physically disabled son. In the past, this action might have been common, but in the age of the Internet, it was considered so unfair that his son could not obtain the job, and the official almost lost his job.

Such an open technical state directly results in an open society; being open and transparent has gradually become the main characteristic of contemporary Chinese society and the most basic requirement for exercising power. Any power must be exercised in an open and transparent manner, while the result must be directly subject to evaluation and testing by the general public.

More importantly, the Internet's ability to spread information is a very powerful function of organization and mobilization. This function hits home in terms of power abuse.

In the past, Chinese society gave sufficient encouragement and guarantee for political participation by the general public and restriction of powers through the Constitution and special laws, but there was still a large gap for the general public between the restrictions at a theoretical level and those in reality; such a gap came principally from a lack of means rather than political restrictions. Even though an individual might have a wonderful idea and an extremely urgent need, it was not easy for him or her to express them and make them known to society, the general public and political organizations. Even if he or she tried every means to express this idea or need, it was likely that they would be known only by a small number of people in a small scope, and it was difficult to produce great effects on a large scale due to the restricted means of communication. However, in the information age marked by network penetration, this situation has fundamentally changed. Any individual, group or organization, as long as they are willing, can express their requirements, spread their ideas, contribute their opinions, and find like-minded supporters through the Internet; organizations and bodies that seem to be virtual across regions and national boundaries but can play a role in political development can exert an impact on the behaviors of those in power in real political life.

The people in power can treat scattered criticism from the general public with contempt and show ostensible obedience; however, they cannot use their power do whatever they want in the face of the powerful dissemination of information and organizational functions of the Internet.

4.2.3 Social Transformation Makes the Rule of Law Become a Must

People often say that over more than 30 years of development, China has completed the course that the international community took one hundred or even several hundred years to complete. China has made changes over the course of several decades that were also made in foreign countries, but in those countries, accomplishing the changes took several hundred years. Such a social transition was certainly earthshaking.

As the social conditions change, the way of governing the society also changes.

In the past, some Westerners had a habit of saying that traditional Chinese society was ruled by one man, and there was no awareness of any rule of law. Such a judgment reveals an arrogant disdain or well-meaning pity: How pathetic are the people in a society that is not under the rule of law. However, Westerners do not understand that such a situation is not uncomfortable and uncivilized in traditional Chinese society.

Traditional Chinese society was dominated by agriculture and existed under a strict planned economic operational mode in which all things were planned and arranged in an orderly way, so the society was ultra-stable. In traditional Chinese society, a strict urban-rural dual system of household registration was adopted, the population was basically immobile and was not encouraged to move, and the majority of the households were self-sufficient and formed a relatively closed society. Members of large clans in rural areas lived together, people in urban areas lived in compounds, workers worked at the same factories throughout their lifetimes, and people did not move for decades and met regularly or frequently. This is a typical acquaintance society.

In such a social state, ancestors represent authority, human feelings are principles and face-to-face agreements is a contract. All of the issues that are addressed by laws in Western society are dealt with by reason in traditional Chinese society. The results are acceptable and convincing to all; there is an affection that is unavailable in laws that can warm people.

However, the current social state has changed.

- The market economy has changed the trajectory of the life of social groups as well as their behavioral patterns. Market competition is changeable, and market traders have different intentions and frequently change their minds. As the social system grows, interpersonal relationships become increasingly complicated and the pattern of interests becomes more and more subtle, so it is possible for problems to occur in any segment at any time. More and more uncertainties exist among people, and the old ticket cannot give its holder access to the new passenger ship.
- A huge floating population of nearly 200 million people makes a living across China. Today's young and charming occupants of a house may be replaced tomorrow by a new group of youths. Colleagues change jobs before their names are fully remembered. The people whom we contact most frequently and who have the greatest impact on us and the closest connections of interests with us

are those whom we meet only by chance instead of the relatives and friends who have a bond of kinship with us. People have increasingly become strangers to each other.

- Children in the USA, on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, wear Nike shoes made in China. When a Chinese child is rescued after being buried for three days after an earthquake, he yells: “I want to drink iced Coca-Cola”. In the past, divorce was considered a disreputable practice that had to be enacted quietly, while in present-day society, divorce proceedings may be instituted for the sake of property, and the parties involved may even appear on TV talk shows to seek support. Society has become increasingly open, with both roof and walls removed.

The new social state calls for and generates a new operational mode.

What is most certain in an uncertain society? The rule of law can help social groups find certainties amidst uncertainties and create stable expectations for proceedings that have never previously occurred.

What is most authoritative in a society of strangers? The rule of law can build trust and make cooperation possible among people who are unfamiliar with each other. With laws as the media, cooperation among people becomes the same as that between people through a contract.

What is most trustworthy in an open society? Different countries have different cultures, and different groups have different values, but the rule of law can make all of these differences insignificant.

As such a social state has become the general trend in Chinese society, the rule of law will become increasingly prominent.

Of course, as the rule of law has just begun in Chinese society, hypercorrection and free riding are unavoidable; for example, now that it is easy for people to file lawsuits in China, they are prone to suing for mere trifles; as the signs of being apt to file lawsuits emerge, some departments have become keen to make laws and try every means to turn special laws into “departmental laws” in their own interests. However, we can adopt an optimistic attitude: When the people realize that it is necessary to use laws to defend themselves and they are no longer unscrupulous, they subconsciously recognize the authority of laws. This is the victory gained by the rule of law, though it is only the first step.

Therefore, as more people file lawsuits and more issues are covered by laws, we do not need to worry about the prospect of the rule of law in Chinese society.

4.2.4 New Expectation: Continuously Expand the List of Rights

Man's natural rights may exist, but they cannot be established merely by God; they should be continuously enriched, substantiated and achieved along with social development.

The contents of rights are different at different stages of social development. The utopian ideals of the past may become the baseline of rights in today's society.

More than 30 years ago in China, having adequate food was an important right that had to be guaranteed to the people through great efforts in Chinese society. However, in today's Chinese society, the people's expectations regarding their rights are no longer related merely to sufficient food. This is because the right has been well achieved in Chinese society; China has shaken off poverty, has secured ample food for its people and is moving towards building a well-off society in an all-around way.

In today's China, the people are more concerned about being politically and culturally well off after being economically well off; they demand great socialist democratic progress, great prosperity in the socialist culture, a life with more happiness and dignity, and a more just and harmonious society. These aspects were called the "new expectations of the people" at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. In fact, these expectations call for rights. Every expectation of the people means that the list of rights in Chinese society is further extended.

Once compiled, the list of rights must be achieved. If it is not achieved, the people will demand their rights; if they fail to obtain those rights peacefully, they will seek them unpeacefully; if such seeking is not enough, they will make great trouble. Although mass disturbance create headaches for local officials, we believe that they are a good thing because they represent the people's new expectations regarding their rights. Causing some chaos and instability is not a bad thing. Parturition and the arrival of a new life are always accompanied by pain.

Therefore, once needs arise in society, these needs are better qualified than politicians and great revolutions to promote social progress and intensify the reform of the political system.

When a new expectation of the people arises in Chinese society, a new right of the people is guaranteed, and Chinese society becomes more civilized.

In contrast, every example of progress in Chinese society will arouse new expectations and claims for rights by the people.

In this way, Chinese society is gradually becoming politically civilized.

Some people anchor great hopes on grandiloquence and clear attitudes about the reform of the political system, and they believe that as long as determination and attitudes exist, results will certainly appear. In fact, with regard to the reform of the political system, determination and attitudes are important, but the objective necessity is more realistic and meaningful. Every change in the political system of Chinese society over the years has been fueled by economic and social development and technical progress. If no social differentiation and transformation had come about, the new expectations of the people could not have formed during economic and social development, the expansion of the Internet and the development of information based on technical progress. These changes in the Chinese political system could not have been imagined 30 or even 15 years ago.

4.3 A Clear Distinction Between the Body of the Political System and Its Function

At present, the reform of the political system is being discussed throughout all levels of society; however, the understanding of the political system differs so greatly that there is poor communication in many discussions, even when they are heated. Some theoretical issues concerning the political system must be considered to clarify the foundation for the political system, review its evolutionary path, and ascertain its responsibilities, which are highly beneficial processes for understanding the reform of the political system in Chinese society and thus pushing it forward.

4.3.1 The Political System has a “Body”—Attribute—and a “Function”—Content

The political system refers to a series of institutional arrangements for a social political operation. When talking about the political system in daily life, we often consider it an overall indivisible system. In fact, the political system includes a “body” and a “function”.

The “body” means the institutional attribute of the political system. The political system falls within the scope of the superstructure and is subordinate to the economic foundation of a society. As the form and embodiment of the political institution, the political system is decided by the economic form of a society. In practice, the political system remains separate from the lower levels; this is only an institutional arrangement that serves the social development of a society. Therefore, the political system of a society can be neither designated nor denied at will; on the contrary, the political system should arise out of the needs of the economic foundation and change with the economic foundation. It should be chosen based on the road towards social development and utilized to achieve the goals of social development.

The historical development of Chinese society has made China choose the socialist road. Public ownership is dominant in the production means of Chinese society, which means that the political system and institutions should take shape in response to the developmental requirements of a socialist society. It is not said that China does not follow the capitalist path. Mao Zedong said that China also wanted to learn from foreign countries, but “the teacher always bullied the student and the student cannot escape the destiny of being enslaved despite his learning”. Therefore, why did we learn?

In a word, the political system stands above the economic and social forms but serves the needs of the socialist path towards development. China has taken the socialist road, so the political system of Chinese society is bound to have the attributes of socialism and reflect its requirements and values. We should not be prone to judge whether the system is socialist or capitalist in regard to every issue,

but the issue of whether it is socialist or capitalist objectively exists and will not disappear merely because the issue is not investigated.

Therefore, the political system cannot be abstractly evaluated by not considering its social environment. Its quality completely depends on the economic foundation of the society and the requirements of its developmental path. The reason that Chinese society repeatedly stresses that China's political system conforms to the national conditions and generally adapts to the requirements of economic and social development is that China's political system has ensured the long-term rapid development of its economy and a harmonious and stable society. The political system deserves such evaluation.

The "function" means the form of the political system. According to the study of institutional theory, "institution" and "system" are correlated in their focus on their respective aspects. The institution places more emphasis on philosophy and value. An institution is given "basic" status because its philosophy and value are core aspects and because its content is crucial. How are such value and philosophy reflected and practiced? They should be guaranteed by the system. The political system unfolds and renders the political institution, its philosophy and its value concrete. This process determines that in the formation of the political institution, connotation and content are enriched. A political institution cannot be developed overnight and once and for all. A philosophy may be reflected in various ways, and a value may be guaranteed by different means. Therefore, the political institution takes various forms, and the political institutions that serve the same developmental goal may differ in content.

When analyzing the issues concerning the political system from the perspectives of the "body" and the "function", we find that what can and cannot be changed in the reform of the political system is very clear.

4.3.2 The "Body" of the Political System Cannot be Changed

What is the "body" of China's political system?

The leadership of the Communist Party of China, the people's democracy and the socialist rule of law are the requirements of China's political system at the "body" level. These requirements are the essential attributes of China's political system and cannot be changed.

Some people may ask: Why is the leadership of the Communist Party of China a must? The answer is simple: the socialist construction must be led by a proletarian party rather than political parties of other classes. The social nature of our construction determines the class attribute of the core leadership. Some people may further ask: Why cannot a new proletarian party be established to replace the Communist Party of China? Such a change is logically unfeasible. As long as a party in Chinese society is really a proletarian party, its purpose and faith are certainly communism; the Communist Party of China is such a proletarian party. If a party's faith is not communism, it cannot be proletarian. Therefore, we further stress that the leadership of the Communist Party of China is reflected in its theory

of political purpose and faith, and its leadership is not merely, or not mainly, the leadership of its members. The purpose of the political party is achieved through faith in its members, and the party's members do not drape themselves in the flag to impress people and seek personal gains in the name of the party.

We do not say that the behavior of the leadership of the Communist Party of China has been perfect and that its members have always been worthy of the name. In practical governance, many improper practices, methods and acts; some members are not truly aligned with the thought of the Party and are even inferior to some non-Party people in terms of their faith in communism. This situation must be changed, but the change involves the "function", as will be discussed below.

Let us examine the system of the people's congress. Some people worship the Western democratic system but lose sight of the people's democracy based on the system of the people's congress. Unlike the institutional arrangements that exclude the overwhelming majority of the people and include only a small number of members of elite groups, the system of the people's congress can be mastered by the overwhelming majority of the people in Chinese society and used by them to guarantee and exercise their rights.

In modern society, there is differentiation among social groups. Some groups adapt to the game rules of a modern society; for example, the intelligentsia, industrial and commercial class and power class can utilize their own resources to easily achieve their goals, while other groups are marginalized and become tools for social progress, such as the land-lost farmers arising out of urbanization and the blue-collar workers coming from the building and manufacturing industries.

However, all of these people in the middle and low strata still have the sacred right to survive and develop. The reform of the political system cannot but enhance and cannot plunder their inadequate rights. The Matthew Effect is taken for granted in the Western world but is absolutely unfeasible in China. As a Chinese saying goes, "It is necessary to reduce the surplus and make up for insufficiency".²¹

We take the guarantee of rights as an example. Modern Western society is praiseworthy in guaranteeing rights, so some of our reforms should expressly or implicitly keep up with these practices. However, can this really be done?

In China, 300 million people have come to have a lifestyle similar to that of Americans, and some even have a better lifestyle than Americans. However, it is not easy to give 1.3 billion Chinese people the lifestyle of Americans. At present, no institutional framework can afford to make such a commitment, which is impossible even under the current institutional framework of the USA. What does the reform of the political system look like to people who believe that they will always be in the position of the ordinary people in society?

Some people may ask: Why are the ordinary people always the focus? As long as opportunities are provided, the ordinary people can transition into social elites. This judgment is correct, and the reform of our political system expands precisely this possibility. However, no matter how much expansion occurs, the ordinary

²¹Chapter 77, *Laozi*.

groups will always objectively exist in a society, and especially in Chinese society. We can expect that for a long time, the ordinary groups will still make up the majority of China's population.

The system of people's congress reflects the principle that all state powers come from and belong to the people. It is the fundamental system under which the overwhelming majority of the people are the masters of the country. Why do we need to change this?

The socialist rule of law embodies the production relationship and mode in socialist society. It protects the rights and interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. If the nature of the socialist rule of law is changed, the socialist mode and relationship of production will be destroyed. Therefore, it cannot be changed.

We should bear in mind that the reform neither denies all previously existing systems nor uproots all practices. In terms of improvement, if the reform denies the developmental path, purpose and faith for which the Chinese people have struggled for approximately one hundred years, it will not be a true reform.

4.3.3 The "Function" of the Political System Can and Must be Changed

The reform of the "body" of the political system must not be forgotten; rashly changing the "body" will lead to a change in the direction of social development. If the "function" of the political system is taken as the "body" so that we become overcautious and irresolute regarding the reform of the political system, the problems will become more serious, our developmental goals will not be achieved and our development will stagnate. There is a metaphor in the Chinese Chan sect that when someone points to the moon with his fingers, the intention lies in the moon rather than in the fingers. It is wrong to gaze merely at one's fingers instead of at the moon. After all, other objects, such as chopsticks, can be used to point to the moon.

The "function" of the political system is similar to that of the fingers. If fingers are broken or unavailable, they can be replaced by chopsticks for pointing to the moon. It is possible and essential to change the "function" of the political system that hinders the improvement of the socialist market economic system and the development and progress of the modern civilized society.

The leadership of the Communist Party of China cannot be changed, but the current leadership mode and system of the Communist Party of China can, and even must, be changed. The system of the people's congress cannot be changed, but it is necessary to quickly and substantially change some deputy election modes and methods that are unable to adapt to the increasing political participation of the people and restrict the continued expansion of the people's democracy. The direction of the socialist legal construction cannot be changed, but at present, some law enforcement systems and even the judicial systems must be changed.

We can review a simple example. The Communist Party of China adopts the principle of placing cadres under Party supervision, but not all cadres are chosen by organizational departments; the promotion of cadres should be open to discussion. In the case of the election of a Party secretary or mayor, the Party can evaluate and designate 18 or even more candidates who can then be elected by the respective congresses; the organizational departments should not step into that election to perform behind-the-scenes manipulations and should surrender to the will of the leading officials.

Of course, some groups may deliberately confuse the “body” of the political system with the “function” in their own interests, taking the “function” as the “body” and making it an excuse for not carrying out the reform of the political system. We can also recognize that the difficulty in the current reform of the political system lies in ascertaining the willingness to make changes rather than judging whether changes should be made. This difficulty occurs because any system involves particular interests that arise out of the system and increase in reliance on the system. When interests reach a certain scale, they will in turn build a self-protective mechanism to reinforce their original system and obstruct changes to it. Where change is unavoidable, the interest groups will externalize the pressure for system reform or make minor non-system changes to alleviate social pressure. However, such an action provides only temporary relief and eventually results in disaster.

In this regard, we must have a clear attitude—the content involving the “function” of the political system must be changed profoundly; we shall not beat around the bush or make only minor repairs. For example, if public power is not subject to restrictions, it should be changed; if civic rights are not guaranteed, changes must be made; if the rule of law is not respected, changes must be made; if power is paired with the market for seeking personal gain, changes must be made; if the urban-rural dual segmentation is not just, changes must be made; if social operation is bureaucratized, changes must be made, etc. This list of possible reforms of the political system can be greatly extended. In this respect, Deng Xiaoping once said: “We must engage in revolution rather than make improvements and repairs.”²² Even though some aspects cannot be changed overnight, we must put into practice the following remark made by Deng Xiaoping: “We may be unable to fully finish this task, but at least we are responsible for laying a solid foundation for and identifying a correct direction for finishing it.”²³

It should be noted that theoretically, we can clearly explain the “body” and “function” of the political system, but it is not easy to practically differentiate them. This is because the “body” and “function” of the political system are not distinct from each other and are often interwoven; it is difficult to separate them because they are like two sides of a coin, which are interdependent. This is the root cause of the complexity and difficulties of the reform of the political system.

²²*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 130.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 342–343.

4.4 Entry Point and Breakthrough in the Reform of the Political System

Public opinion is very beneficial for promoting the reform of the political system, but that reform cannot merely rest on declaration and anticipation; substantive breakthroughs must occur in crucial issues. Therefore, realistically seeking breakthroughs in the reform of the political system and choosing the path and strategy for that reform are of great significance for the current reform of the political system in China. By reviewing the course of the reform, observing the reform law and overcoming the difficulties, we should make breakthroughs in the following three aspects of the reform of the political system that will help intensify the next step of the reform in Chinese society.

4.4.1 Take the Guarantee of Rights as the Basic Requirement for the Reform of the Political System

In recent years, many baffling phenomena have occurred in the operations of Chinese society. For example, on the one hand, the economy grew rapidly and the GDP soared; on the other hand, the people faced difficulties in attending schools and obtaining medical treatment and housing, and the economic growth rate has been in striking contrast to the conditions of life. University students failed to find jobs but were “employed” in the statistical table of the education department, and the price of water increased because residents were “represented” by the chairman of the water company, so some people joked that we had entered an era of being “represented” in Chinese society. These phenomena seem irrelevant, but they share a common point—legitimate rights are not guaranteed. Entrepreneurs lack the right to perform equal operations according to the requirements of the market economy and can only seek compensation in the non-economic fields. The basic welfare of the general public is disregarded, and hard work cannot result in wealth. As we cannot escape the destiny of being “represented”, it is right to console ourselves by refraining from attempting to change some issues.

As these abnormal phenomena are temporarily mitigated by the inevitable means, they will cause unseen troubles in the future healthy development of the society. Therefore, effectively guaranteeing the rights of citizens is the basic requirement of the reform of the political system.

In fact, social development is a process in which the list of civil rights is continuously extended, while this process relies on progress in the political system. Superficially, the political system is a mode of social power operations involving the distribution and adjustment of social interests and, more deeply, the delimitation and guaranteeing of the rights of social groups. Generally, if the economic system of a society focuses on how to motivate different social groups to create wealth, the political system of a society, by guaranteeing rights, focuses on how different social groups distribute and manage wealth.

Some people pin their hopes on a smart, kind and omnipotent master to guarantee fairness and justice in distributing social wealth. However, a smart master may make mistakes, and a kind master may not be impartial. Faced with the complicated appeals of different interests, so-called omnipotence is only a dream; moreover, if a master is selfish and considers only his or her own interests, troubles increase. Therefore, the most reliable scenario is for social groups to exercise the rights bestowed on them by the Constitution to safeguard their own interests. The socialist democracy is developed to practically guarantee the democratic rights of the people to become the masters of the country, especially the rights to vote, know, participate, express and supervise. Grassroots democracy is expanded to improve the grassroots self-governing organizations and system of democratic management so that the people may better participate in managing public affairs.

However, given the lessons from the reform of the political system of Chinese society in recent years, we should go further—in regard to guaranteeing rights through the political system, it is necessary to identify the people whose rights are guaranteed and the rights that are to be guaranteed. Without such delimitation, the promise to guarantee rights is empty talk and may even be a lie.

Therefore, identifying rights is necessary because the interests and rights of different groups in modern society are not necessarily confrontational, consistent or complementary. In many cases, a particular right of a certain group is achieved at the expense of another right of other groups. In the development of modern society, urbanization deprives farmers of land; rural migrant workers in cities earn extremely low wages so their employers can gain a secure competitive advantage based on low costs in international trade; and many workers are laid off to improve the efficiency of enterprises. However, these people at the middle and low levels still have the sacred rights to survive and develop. The reform of the political system must enhance, not plunder, their inadequate rights. We often speak of characteristics, and this is precisely the greatest “characteristic” of the reform of the political system in Chinese society.

4.4.2 Take Regulation of Powers as the First Point of Action in the Reform of the Political System

Political power is the indispensable factor for ensuring that a society is stable and orderly. Any act that weakens political power is naïve and even detrimental; in particular, strong political control is a blessing, not a tragedy, for a large and rapidly developing country in transformation, but trusting the power does not amount to letting it be wielded at will.

In recent years, there have been lessons in this aspect from the development of Chinese society; for example, unregulated power restricts the intensification of and improvement through reform of the economic system.

In 1993, the goal of establishing a socialist market economic system was put forward in Chinese society; after ten years of reform and experimentation, the goal of improving the socialist market economic system was specified in 2003. Another

decade had elapsed when the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was convened. However, in fact, several aspects of the socialist market economic system have not yet been improved, and some aspects of establishing the system and making breakthroughs are even still under way. For example, breakthroughs are continuously being made in the reform of the system of distribution of income and the system of the government's administrative management; difficulties still exist in some specific reforms, such as those involving the monopolized industries, the prices of resource products, environmental protection charges and the fiscal and tax system. These difficulties comes from self-indulgence in exercising power at different levels and in different departments.

More importantly, this self-indulgence distorts the path and undermines the performance of the reform of the economic system so that heterization occurs in that reform.

The market-oriented reform of the economic system is undoubtedly a basic direction that can greatly arouse the enthusiasm of the economic players and optimize the allocation of social resources. In particular, the adoption of the socialist market economic system was received with great hope. We believed that "socialist" was a crucial element added to "the market economy" so that the good things of the market economy could be introduced and some inherent defects could be avoided.

Such judgment is not wishful thinking. If there is a guarantee from a good and scientific political system that adapts to the development and progress of a modern society and is based on a socialist political civilization, the socialist market economic system can avoid the drawbacks of the market economy while maintaining its strong points.

In the more than 20 years of the practice of a market economic system, such hope did not become a reality, and blatant power-for-money deals occurred at many levels. As one economist mentioned, crony capitalism emerged. The departments and people in power wielded power to gain undue interests from the market and under used the pretext of a market economy to shirk their responsibilities to provide social security and public services. Thus, the people questioned the market orientation in reform and cherished the memory of the planned economy.

We should not dodge the people's questions about such issues. The problems arising out of marketization over more than 20 years are much more far-reaching and severe than those of which the people have been aware. However, the root cause of the problems is that drawbacks and distortions were caused by inadaptation of the reform of the political system to the reform of the economic system and excessive dogmatization rather than marketization by those in power. The reform of the political system lagged, and those in power were not subject to restrictions, leading the ordinary people to blame the market economy. Without a guarantee from the reform of the political system, the achievements of the reform of the economic system will be lost and the goal of modernization cannot be achieved.

A series of institutional innovations, such as the transformation of government functions, the cultivation of non-governmental organizations, and the encouragement of media supervision, are being made, and modern technical progress, such as

openness and transparency from the Internet, is being relied upon to contain those in power under the rule of law and ensure that they serve and do not take advantage of society. This is the true beginning of the reform of China's political system.

4.4.3 Practice the Faith to Build the New Political Legitimacy of the Governing Party

The current political pattern of Chinese society is the result of revolution, reform and construction carried out by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China; it is based on history and is an established fact, so the governing legitimacy of the Party is not in doubt. However, with social development, progress and the evolution of the times, the Communist Party of China must build a new political ecology by practicing the faith, thus further enriching its foundation of political legitimacy.

The Communist Party of China is the only governing party in Chinese society, and the reform of China's political system must be conducted under its leadership. However, if the reform of the political system is discussed by overlooking the political advantages and advanced nature of the governing party—the Communist Party of China—there will be no real reform of the political system, and a quarrel over multi-party political reform will occur. Some people will launch an attack: Since it is a mediocre political party and is not essentially different from Parties A and B established by us, why is it the only governing party, and why can we not compete with it for an opportunity to become the governing party?

Therefore, the Communist Party of China must explicitly declare and practice its faith. If members of the Party have no interests of their own, as required in the Constitution of the Communist Party of China, power-for-money deals and abuse of power for personal gain will not occur. If members of the Communist Party of China really serve the people as public servants, the rights of social citizens can be guaranteed. If socialism with Chinese characteristics guarantees the status of the people as the masters of the country, the people can effectively supervise those in political power, and it will be unnecessary to initiate cyclical competition among political parties.

The Communist Party of China must carry out self-improvement and self-purification and take transformative actions to tell the people that all of the existing inadaptation, lack of standardization and non-ideal aspects at the institutional level are attributable to the failure to fully reflect and indifference to the advanced nature of the governing party and the primary stage and ineligibility of socialist factors rather than to contradictions within the governing party and the predicament of socialism. These problems can be solved by reinforcing the building of the governing party and making continued progress in socialism.

Finally, it should be stressed that the practice of faith is reflected in the Communist Party of China's attitude toward the reform of the political system, so the attitude must be profoundly changed. In the reform of the political system, there are no technical difficulties that cannot be overcome and no essential conditions that

cannot be obtained. Someone said, “It takes at least 60 years for cultural change, 6 years for change in the economic system and 6 months for change in the political system.” This remark reveals the core code for institutional reform. When we really take action, we may find that the reform of the political system is not as difficult, complicated and slow as we imagined.

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Chapter 4

Strategic Guarantee: Governing the Country Under the Rule of Law in an All-Around Way

The rule of law is the most central value in and the most prominent hallmark of a modern society; it is also the most distinctive feature of a modern country as the basic way to exercise governance and handle affairs of state. With a clear and profound historical self-consciousness at a high level, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China effected major breakthroughs in the philosophy of the rule of law, the strategy of governing the country, the governance system and the governing style by building the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics, thus laying a solid foundation for the Communist Party of China to shoulder the great mission of governing the country properly, handling the affairs of state, and charting a new course for state governance.

1 Theoretical Self-consciousness About State Governance

Since the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China identified the modernization of the state governance system and governance capacity as the overall objective for comprehensively intensifying reform, the issue has become the focus of attention in the whole society and a hot topic for academic research. Such attention and research show a tendency that seems to unconsciously emerge and cannot be treated lightly: In theory, state governance is adopted as an established, even fixed concept; in practice, state governance is regarded as an established, even fixed model to be imitated; as an objective, state governance is envisioned as an established, even fixed state to be pursued. However, is the philosophy of state governance one-sided? Is there a single model of state governance? Is the objective of state governance one-dimensional? The answer to all these questions is definitely no. Nevertheless, it is necessary to clarify the reasons for this answer, and a theoretical self-consciousness of state governance should first be developed since full-fledged

theories are the solid foundation of politics, and theoretical self-consciousness is the prerequisite for ensuring scientific behaviors.

1.1 Defining What State Governance Should Look like

Over the years, we have often stressed that “the developmental outlook determines the developmental model”. Similarly, the outlook on state governance determines the model of state governance. Different outlooks on state governance may give birth to different models of state governance, and different models of state governance may take shape behind different outlooks on state governance.

Some people may argue that in the final analysis, the state governance system is the institutional system of a country, the state governance capacity is the executive institutional capacity of that country, and the most important feature of the institutions is the equal treatment of every person without discrimination. If everyone is equal before the institutions, as long as the recognized institutions and those that work well in other countries are adopted for modernization, the state governance system and governance capacity can be modernized; thus, it is meaningless to pay attention to and discuss the outlook on state governance. This view appears to be based on common sense, but in fact, it is greatly fallacious. In philosophical institutional research, the core philosophy of the institutional non-neutrality principle states that any institution presents a dominant strategy and favors particular groups, and the performance of an institution varies greatly with varying groups, behavioral patterns and social stages. What a country, a society or a group needs, values, treasures and anticipates directly determines the preferences and choices of that country, society and group for an institutional model.

Therefore, in contemporary Chinese society, the institutional model for state governance cannot be chosen by merely following others' views and cannot be indiscriminately copied from other models; on the contrary, such an institutional model should be closely linked to the pursuit of values, social ideals, goals and dreams of contemporary Chinese society. The following factors determine what form the state governance should take:

- If China is not prosperous and powerful, it will not become part of the international community; if the Chinese nation is not rejuvenated, its people will not deserve to be considered the descendants of the dragon (a metaphor for the Chinese nation). The state governance in contemporary China is not designed merely to turn a jungle into good social order, and just taming a society is insufficient to ensure that all is well; on the contrary, making the country prosperous and powerful and reviving the Chinese nation should be taken as the most basic goals. We should modernize the state governance system and governance capacity to turn China, a developing country that was once bullied by alien powers, into an economically developed, politically advanced, culturally prosperous and socially harmonious modern socialist modern country firmly

established in the East by the middle of the 21st century. We should modernize the state governance system and governance capacity to give the Chinese nation—which manifests a splendid five-thousand-year-old culture, is heir to a five-thousand-year-old civilization, shares its values with the world and promotes the common prosperity and progress of the world through its soft power—a strong position among the nations of the world. Any institutional system that cannot achieve this goal is worthless even if it is vividly described.

- Going global does not amount to losing our identity; working for the world means achieving a win-win outcome with the world. Chinese society cannot always be the vassal of Western society. We cannot fantasize that a peaceful, amiable and civilized lion can live unscathed in a world governed by wolves. We should actively participate in developing the fairest and most just rules for the world while observing the existing rules of the world in good faith. To achieve this goal, we should make our own institutional choice of state governance.
- The ultimate goal for making the country prosperous and powerful and reviving the Chinese nation is the happiness of the people. The most fundamental and highest goal of China's state governance is to ensure that the Chinese people become the masters of the country, that they live a more prosperous life with more dignity, and that every person among a population of 1.3 billion is able to achieve free and all-around development. The only social institutions that should be chosen in our state governance system are those that fully respect the status of the people as the main body, give full scope to the enthusiasm of the people as the master and lead the people to become the master of the country to achieve their own development and build their own society. Only the institutions that ensure that the development of Chinese society is fully led and determined by the people and that all of the developmental achievements in that society, including material and spiritual achievements, are shared by the people should be adopted in the modernization of the state governance system and governance capacity.

1.2 Figuring Out the Possibility of Exercising State Governance

Defining what the state governance system should look like is merely the precondition for state governance. To realize the vision, attention should be paid to the possibility of exercising state governance. The state governance system should not be defined and chosen on the basis of assumptions. If the actual economic and social conditions and the specific historical and cultural background are not considered, the modernization of the state governance system and governance capacity is nothing but a castle in the air. General Secretary Xi Jinping noted: “The governance system of a country is determined by the historical inheritance, cultural tradition, level of economic and social development as well as the people in that

country. The state governance system currently practiced in China is a result of long-term development, gradual improvement and endogenous evolution based on China's historical inheritance, cultural tradition, and economic and social development."¹ This remark fully reflects a scientific understanding and a high level of self-consciousness in choosing the state governance system in Chinese society.

National governance is not a new thing. In human society, the requirements and practice of national governance emerged along with the birth of states. National governance systems and capacities vary with different times and countries. Different governance systems and capacities determine different national governance performances. If a governance system and governance capacity, though once very good and effective, fail to keep abreast of the times and of social evolution, they will be eliminated. Historically, China established a highly complete national governance system, characterized mainly by the feudal system and fully fit for the requirements of the feudal society, and its governance capacity continuously improved over the course of one thousand years; however, with a great change in the times, China became highly vulnerable to strong weapons from foreign capitalist societies. Thus, Chinese society suffered nearly 100 years of humiliation.

Can China adopt the governance system of other countries, especially that of the countries and societies that defeated it, to contain and conquer the foreign countries? Many attempts—including those involving a constitutional monarchy, a parliamentary system, a multi-party system, a presidential system and monarch restoration—have been made in Chinese society since the Opium War. As mentioned by Mao Zedong, “the Chinese people are very willing to learn from foreign countries, but the teacher always bullies the student in spite of learning.” Learning was ineffective, and the Chinese were bullied even more after learning. In fact, even if China had not been bullied by others, the foreign system was unsuitable for it. The suitability of a system depends on the environment. When working in Zhejiang Province, General Secretary Xi Jinping talked about the donkey-horse theory: the horse ran faster than the donkey, so after the horse's hoof was found to be longer than that of the donkey, the donkey's hoof was replaced by that of the horse; as a result, the donkey became slower. After the horse's leg was found to be longer than that of the donkey, the donkey's leg was replaced by that of the horse; as a result, the donkey could not run. What should be done? We took a road that was suitable for us and came from our situation—the socialist road under the guidance of Marxism.

This governance system is possible in Chinese society because it fits the historical inheritance, cultural tradition and level of economic and social development of Chinese society. It is the result of the great practice of more than 30 years of

¹Xi Jinping's Speech in the Special Workshop for the Main Leading Cadres at the Provincial and Ministerial Levels to Study and Carry Out the Decisions of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform, *People's Daily*, February 18, (2014).

reform and opening up and continued experimentation over more than 60 years since the founding of the new China. It was derived from profoundly summarizing the more than 170-year course of development of the Chinese nation since the beginning of modern times and from the inheritance of the more than 5000-year-old civilization of the Chinese nation. Its profound historical origin and extensive realistic foundation are unavailable or hardly exist in any other institutional system.

Finding the correct way to achieve national governance is important, but it is also necessary to extend its capacity and potential as far as possible. The task of further improving the governance system chosen by us and further enhancing its capacity to modernize the governance system and capacity cannot be accomplished overnight; it requires practice and takes time. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping said: "It may take 30 years for us to build a more mature and well-functioning system regarding various aspects." It will take even longer to really modernize the national governance system and capacity and truly achieve the modernization of the national institutional systems under the leadership of the Party—a full set of closely connected and mutually coordinated national systems, including the institutional system and the legal and regulatory arrangements in the fields of economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological civilization and party building—and to use these national institutions to manage various social aspects, including reform; development; stability; home and foreign affairs; national defense; and governance of the Party, country and army. Long-term development, gradual improvement and endogenous evolution are not only projects begun in the past but are also ongoing in the present and will be continued in the future. We should be fully prepared for a long, complicated and zigzag course to truly modernize the national governance system and capacity, and we should not rush the process to obtain quick results or unduly crave greatness and success. We must not be dispirited and pessimistic, nor should we lose confidence in our ability to achieve this goal.

1.3 Take a Firm Stand on the Necessity for National Governance

It is necessary to focus on what the national governance system should look like and build on the possibility of its existence. The socialist system with Chinese characteristics is the inevitable choice for China's modern national governance system. After the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, when explaining the overall goal of comprehensively deepening the reform, some people have always stressed the last point: promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. This seems to be less problematic than other goals, but it will lead to serious, even disruptive mistakes. General Secretary Xi Jinping especially emphasized it when he said: "We must fully understand and master the overall goal of comprehensively

intensifying the reform and combine the following two sentences into an integral whole: improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity; our direction is the socialist road with Chinese characteristics.” In fact, the remark made by the general secretary addresses the abovementioned phenomenon. For today’s Chinese society, the national governance system has the specified content of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, the modernization of the national governance system is, in the final analysis, the modernization of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. Under the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, we combine the fundamental political system and basic political system with the basic economic system and various other institutions and systems; furthermore, we combine the national democratic system with the grassroots democratic system and integrate the Party’s leadership, the system of making the people become the master of the country and governing the country under the rule of law. This approach conforms to China’s national conditions and epitomizes the characteristic and advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is the fundamental institutional guarantee for China’s development, progress and modernization and the basic behavioral norm for realizing the Chinese dream: the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. As the socialist system with Chinese characteristics has not yet become mature and highly functional, further reform must be carried out. However, such a reform aims at improving socialism with Chinese characteristics rather than denying it, building a different type of socialism or uprooting it. For example, against the background of a market economy, the reform of state-owned enterprises is imperative, but such a reform does not mean simple privatization and the stubborn change of the nature of the ownership of these enterprises. It means innovating the internal mechanism of their management operations and solving their real problems; otherwise, the economic foundation for socialism would be undermined. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to accelerate the reform of the political system, but developing socialist democratic politics does not mean that the leadership of the Communist Party of China should be abolished and the system of the people’s congress abandoned. We should not randomly judge whether any issue is socialist or capitalist, but the issue of whether the political system is socialist or capitalist objectively exists and will not disappear because it is not investigated. If our pursuit of modernization eventually leads to the denial of the road towards development, the tenet and faith for which Chinese society has struggled for nearly 100 years, it will not be the modernization that we have anticipated. General Secretary Xi Jinping said: “China is a large country, so we cannot make disruptive mistakes regarding the fundamental issues; otherwise, we cannot recover and remedy the loss.”² The disruptive mistakes are deviations from the correct direction of national governance.

²Speech by Xi (2013).

1.4 Accomplish Many Changes for National Governance

If the formation and selection of the national governance system arise out of objective history and realistic necessity, independent of man's will, optimizing the governance system and enhancing the governance capacity is the area of responsibility in which the main players in history must take the initiative. To promote the modernization of the national governance system and capacity, we must accomplish many tasks; the main points are mentioned below.

- We must retain spiritual independence and use the socialist core values to build spiritual support for national governance. For a society, spiritual independence lays the foundation for economic, political and social independence and guarantees real independence at the economic, political and social levels. If the people spiritually follow the herd and fail to comprehend what is good, what should exist and what is meaningful in society, it is impossible to take an unprecedented road, establish a new system that is superior to others, and confidently and resolutely advance along the chosen road. If Chinese society cannot surpass the competitive advantages of Western society in value outlook, the national governance system's competitive ability will lose its independent spiritual foundation.
- We must have the courage to carry out a self-revolution by improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics while adjusting some interests. Persistence is not dependence on the path, and improvement cannot focus on piecemeal adjustments and repairs. Without an all-around, deep and systematic reform, the socialist system with Chinese characteristics cannot be innovatively developed. Our current emphasis on change means not only change in the inappropriate systems and institutions that were introduced more than 30 years ago but also further changes in some well-functioning systems and institutions; adjustments must be made in the structure of vested interests so that they remain consonant with the times, historical trends and public opinion. This process will certainly meet with objections from some vested interest groups as well as huge resistance and unexpected setbacks. However, we have no choice.
- We must open our minds; broaden our horizons; and absorb, from history and reality, the wealth that civilization offers for nurturing and promoting the modernization of the national governance system and capacity. China's past governance system and the governance systems in modern Western society are different from ours, and even the governance systems of different countries in Western society vary greatly, but this does not mean that there are no similarities amidst these differences. They reflect, to some extent, the understanding, mastery, experimentation and practice of national governance law; they are the crystallization of civilization from progress in human society and the common wealth within it. Refraining from indiscriminately imitating institutional models does not mean that we do not draw upon the good qualities of other systems. Being courageous and skillful in adopting the good aspects of other systems as part of our own is crucial for promoting the modernization of the national governance system and capacity.

2 Operation of the Systems Behind the Rule of Law

The essence of the rule of law is that it is the legal form of a social institutional pattern. The nature of the rule of law originates from its institutional nature, while the consciousness of the rule of law is the institutional consciousness. Adhering to the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics while cultivating and establishing the correct institutional consciousness is the basic precondition for building the socialist system of rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

2.1 Respect the Institutions and Develop an Institutional Awareness

In contemporary society, there is an abnormal phenomenon of institutional awareness being extremely weak—various players in society show none of the respect due to institutional authority and treat the institutions as tools that are owned and used by them and that create changes for them. They obey the institutions that might be useful for their interests but disobey those that do not support their interests. When violating the institutions might obtain benefits for them, they will violate them without hesitation. This kind of institutional consciousness is highly detrimental to social development. As China moves towards social and human modernization, we must respect the internal law of the institutions and the high-quality regulations, consciously safeguard institutional authority and foster proper institutional awareness.

To develop institutional awareness, it is necessary to first be aware that the institutions are not tools to be used by a certain entity to realize its interests to the detriment of those of other players. In reality, institutions are inevitably abused by one group to suppress another; this use is an objective product against the background of the social productive forces rather than the product of the will of a group or a person. The institutions serve as intermediaries for the people to address their social relations in order to realize their freedom and all-around development. Compared with the most fundamental goals of social and human development, the institutions indeed function as tools. However, these functions mean that the institutions are meaningful only for the people with a concept of class or the society with an overall concept; this meaning cannot become an excuse for making the institutions serve as individual tools for a specific person or social player; otherwise, the institutions would become vassals rather than agents of free will and would lose their basic institutional objectivity.

To develop institutional awareness, it is also necessary to realize that there are no special players beyond the institutions in an existing institutional environment and with an institutional object. We recognize that different players have different

statuses in institutional choice and design; some players are institution makers, while others are institution users. We also recognize that different players have different statuses in the same institutional structure; some are dominators and controllers, while others are subject to dominance and control. However, regardless of being active, passive, dominant or subject to dominance, all players are subject to the impact and restrictions of the institutional framework. Only such institutions can work and be meaningful. If some players that should be included, such as the institutional object, are not incorporated into the framework but override the institutions as special players, this institutional arrangement violates the fundamental principle of the universality of institutions. The institutions not subject to universal restrictions are not authoritative and are thus ineffective.

To develop institutional awareness, it is also necessary to ensure that the people as individuals, or certain players, realize that any interests, including freedom, should be realized within and not beyond the regulations. The realization of the people's interests, even freedom, through the institutions that exist as regulations is conditional upon the people's acceptance; in other words, to enjoy the protection of their interests by the institutions, the people should first surrender some interests and freedom. Only in this way can society and all its members realize their own interests and freedom within a coordinated framework. Breaking regulations on an individual basis may temporarily obtain abnormal interests and freedom, but these actions entail the loss of normal interests and others' freedom. If such a phenomenon is allowed, more and more people will try to break regulations; the institutions will exist in name only, and as the law of the jungle takes over, the people's original interests and freedom will also be lost.

2.2 Attach Importance to the Institutions, but Break Away from Institutional Myths

Compared with the contempt for or even defiance of the institutions, the rule of man and the will of the leading officials, paying attention to, trusting and relying on the institutions undoubtedly represent progress. However, in valuing the institutions, we should also notice and prevent the tendency of the institutional myth.

Regarding the institutions, we have built one myth and are building another.

The first myth: If we theoretically identify and design an advanced and excellent institution and respond to its implementation by taking it for granted, this institution can solve all of the problems that we expected so that the whole society, and even human development, will enter a new stage. This myth has shrouded Chinese society for decades and has gradually been rejected in recent years, but the remaining consciousness of it remains non-negligible.

The second myth: With reflections on the rule of man and the understanding of institutional value, the role of the institutions has been increasingly revered to an excessive extent, and the people take it for granted that as long as all things are handled according to the institutions, all of their problems can be solved. If difficult problems within social and political life cannot be solved, they are unquestioningly attributed to bad institutions and systems; once good institutional arrangements have been made and a good system has been established, all of the problems can be easily solved. This myth is still prevalent and is even being enlarged.

The first myth is idealistic and does not take into account the objective historical stage of the development of the productive forces. The second myth involves an element of "pan-institutionalization". To really give play to the institutions, it is essential to shake off both myths and rationally recognize the restrictions and inability of the institutions.

First, the institutions cannot solve problems outside them. From the perspective of social and human development, the institutions are not the origin of such problems. According to one line of thought with which we are familiar, the productive social forces are primary, while the institutions are secondary. The productive forces, not the institutions, play a fundamental role. The institutions are of great significance in terms of guarantee or counteraction, but such guarantee and counteraction occur against the background of or within the existing framework of the productive social forces. The institutions cannot solve the problems that do not concern them and cannot go beyond their own fields or even override the productive social forces. Placing an undue emphasis on the role of institutional change and hoping to realize social development and solve the problems of social development simply through institutional change is not a Marxist approach and will lead to failure in practice.

Another issue is that the institutions cannot declare their arrival themselves. The emergence of an institution and its role in a society are neither conditional upon the people's subjective desire nor based on their evaluation of its value but are based on the developmental level and stage of the productive social forces. A theoretical declaration and a rush for results are detrimental.

Second, the institutions cannot solve non-institutional problems. No matter how meticulous, comprehensive and detailed the institutional design, it cannot address all phenomena in the world and cannot cover all possibilities in social and human development; furthermore, it is fundamentally impossible to accurately quantify and describe the people's sentiments, thinking and motives, and these factors may be non-institutional. Under such circumstances, if a limited institutional design is used to solve unlimited developmental problems, the institution's problem-solving ability will be inadequate. If this tendency towards pan-institutionalization is not corrected, countless predicaments will likely occur due to institutional insufficiency. This may lead to distrust in the institutions and a change from one extreme to another.

Therefore, only when the institutional myths have been discredited can the institutions really work.

3 Practical Logic of Governing China Under the Rule of Law

Under the theme of promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China once again called for building and governing China under the rule of law. In the historical course of moving toward governing China under the rule of law, it is necessary to promote the rule of law in an all-around way, take the road towards the rule of law, explicitly demonstrate the value pursuit of the “four safeguards”, push forward the building of the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics as the overall means and adopt the overall working layout of the “three joint promotions” and the “three integrated constructions”. This series of strategic arrangements reflects the essential requirements for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and the practical logic of governing China under the rule of law in a steadier, quicker and better way.

3.1 *Accurate Functional Positioning*

The rule of law is the central value and most prominent hallmark of a modern society; it is also the most basic way to carry out modern national governance and the most distinctive feature of it. However, as mentioned by Lenin, as soon as we take a small step in the same direction, a seeming truth will become a mistake.³ Upholding the rule of law is necessary, but adoring it is wrong; believing in the rule of law is necessary, but blindly worshipping it is harmful. If we cannot scientifically and accurately position the governance of the country under the rule of law but instead overstate it, unrealistically take it for granted, and believe that it can address all issues and even reshape the country, this approach will not inject positive energy into promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way but will backfire, reduce the governance of the country under the rule of law to empty talk, and even misdirect the efforts to govern China under the rule of law.

For present-day Chinese society, we must clearly state that the governance of the country under the rule of law is not a goal but should be viewed as the strategy for governing the country, modernizing the national governance system and capacity, and making China’s state system—as a socialist country under the people’s democratic dictatorship—and system of government—the people’s congress—more perfect and effective. Instead of abandoning China’s state system and changing its system of government, we intend to realize the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, rather than other dreams, through the governance of the country under the rule of law. The rule of law can change a

³Lenin (2012).

country's landscape and optimize its condition, but it cannot change its nature and basic system.

The practical positioning—governing the country under the rule of law—is profoundly understood by the Communist Party of China and was clearly specified by the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The opening section of the Decisions made during the Fourth Plenary Session stressed: “To build a well-off society in an all-around way, realize the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, comprehensively intensify the reform, improve and develop the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and elevate the governance capacity and level of the Party, it is essential to promote the rule of law in China in an all-around way.” This involves the issue of positioning the governance of the country under the rule of law.

The above remark made during the Fourth Plenary Session covers three things that have been accomplished since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: building a well-off society in an all-around way—a goal proposed at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China—comprehensively intensifying the reform—required at the Third Plenary Session—and promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way—the theme of the Fourth Plenary Session. The expressions “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively” have been specified over a period of three years, but they are not coincidental and do not simply feature a parallel construction; they are part of the road map for realizing the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In fact, upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, promoting reform, opening up and socialist modernization and building China under the rule of law do not lie within the realm of meaning merely of “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively”. Soon after the Fourth Plenary Session, when inspecting Jiangsu Province, General Secretary Xi Jinping added another “comprehensively”—comprehensively strengthening Party discipline. The previously mentioned “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively” and this “comprehensively” represent the objective requirements for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and for reaching a deeper understanding of the law as well as the logical necessity for building China under the rule of law. Strengthening the construction of the Party rules and regulations, as proposed during the Fourth Plenary Session, is an important measure for comprehensively strengthening Party discipline.

Among these aspects of “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively”, building a well-off society in an all-around way is a goal—as long as there is a goal, there is a direction. Comprehensively intensifying the reform is a driving force—as long as there is a driving force, goals can be accomplished. Promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way is a guarantee—only when there are norms or standards can goals be accomplished. Comprehensively strengthening Party discipline is the backbone—we remain unshaken in our conviction and choice of path despite the difficulties.

The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China made it clear that China will build a well-off society in an all-around way by 2020, a date that will

coincide with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. “The basic strategy for governing the country under the rule of law will be implemented in an all-around way; a government under the rule of law will be basically built; judicial credibility will be continuously enhanced; human rights will be duly respected and guaranteed.” These focal points of the Fourth Plenary Session were written early, as connotations of building a well-off society in an all-around way, in the report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. After several decades of development, great achievements were made in transforming Chinese society into a well-off society, and a well-off society has been generally realized, as we have previously mentioned. However, this well-off society remains at a low level and shows a gap; thus, the development is highly unbalanced, uncoordinated and not comprehensive. We are less than four years from 2020. To shore up the weak spots in building a well-off society in an all-around way, it is necessary as soon as possible to inject vitality by comprehensively intensifying the reform, to provide protection by promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way and to create a powerful political core by comprehensively strengthening Party discipline.

Therefore, the above “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively” embody a body, two wings and a core. The goal is the body, while the driving force and strategy are the wings, and the Communist Party of China—a great, glorious, right, advanced and outstanding party—is the core and backbone. Four-pronged measures depict the new blueprint for China’s development. Four pillars jointly support the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In comprehensively intensifying the reform for building a well-off society in an all-around way, it is necessary, based on political courage and wisdom, to lose no time in intensifying the reforms in the important fields by resolutely changing all mind-sets; addressing drawbacks within the institutions and the system that affect the building of a well-off society in an all-around way; and developing a systematic, complete, scientific, standardized, and well-functioning institutional system so that various aspects of the institutions will become more mature and better established. Promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way to build a well-off society in an all-around way aims at better coordinating social forces, balancing social interests, and regulating social relationships and social behaviors so that Chinese society remains vibrant and orderly amidst profound changes. Comprehensively strengthening Party discipline is designed to comprehensively strengthen the ideological construction, organizational construction, working-style improvement and institutional construction of the Party and accelerate efforts to combat corruption and uphold integrity in order to enhance the Party’s capability for self-purification, self-improvement, self-innovation and self-enhancement so that it serves as the strong core leadership in building a well-off society in an all-around way, thus achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

By paying close attention, we discover that comprehensively intensifying the reform in Chinese society was early paired with promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way, accompanied by comprehensively strengthening Party discipline along the way. The discussions during the 8th, 9th and 10th parts of the

Decisions made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China are exactly the same as those that occurred at the Fourth Plenary Session; the 9th part is even titled “promoting the rule of law in China”. This similarity is because the systems and institutions necessary for promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way must be cultivated, formed and established by comprehensively intensifying the reform. This is why General Secretary Xi Jinping called the two Decisions a companion piece: “The Decisions concerning promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way as made during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Decisions concerning comprehensively intensifying the reform as made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China form a companion piece. Comprehensively intensifying the reform must be guaranteed by the rule of law, while promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way calls for an intensification of the reform.” The difficulties, “mine-fields” and “dangerous shoals” in comprehensively intensifying the reform and the ideological inadaptation, lack of standardization in behaviors and institutional incompleteness in promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way should be removed merely by comprehensively strengthening Party discipline; however, they are the starting point and source of action for comprehensively strengthening Party discipline, and they create targets for comprehensively strengthening Party discipline.

It is not merely legal instrumentalism for us to functionally position the governance of the country under the rule of law through the logical relationship among “in an all-around way” and “comprehensively”. However, laws cannot become the tools of political power but must be and are inevitably the means of governing the country; we cannot reverse the order. If separated from the institutional background, the rule of law will produce no effects and will go astray. As emphasized by Karl Marx, in a modern country, laws must adapt to the overall economic condition and must perform, in an internationally harmonious manner, in a way that is not resistant to itself due to inner contradictions.⁴ In this regard, we do not need to steer clear of the crucial point.

3.2 *Firm Self-consciousness Along the Path*

The goal of contemporary China to build a socialist country under the rule of law is explicit, but different choices of paths for building a socialist country under the rule of law and really governing the country according to laws will yield totally different results. The path of a country towards achieving the rule of law should tally with the conditions of the country’s economic and social development of the country, its historical and cultural traditions and the people’s psychological behaviors, while

⁴Marx and Engels (1995b).

simply introducing the rule of law as it exists in foreign countries or echoing the views of others cannot work and may even cause larger problems. Unswervingly taking the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics is the self-conscious path highlighted at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

The socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics is not an abstract discourse; on the contrary, it has well-defined connotations and requirements. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China explained two aspects of the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics.

The first aspect involves basic requirements: we should uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China and practice that leadership throughout the process and in various aspects of governing the country according to law, and we should uphold the status of the people as the main body and regard them as the primary source of strength for governing the country according to law. Moreover, we should ensure that everyone is equal before the law and that all organizations and individuals respect the authority of the Constitution and the laws, carry out activities within the scope of the Constitution and laws, exercise powers or rights and fulfill responsibilities or obligations according to the Constitution and laws, and have no privileges outside the bounds of the Constitution and laws. We should combine the governance of the country under the rule of law with the governance of the country by virtue of laws, embody moral philosophy in the rule of law, reinforce the role of laws in promoting moral construction, foster the spirit of the rule of law with morals, strengthen the role of morals in supporting the culture of the rule of law, and ensure that laws and morals supplement and complement each other. Finally, we should proceed from the reality of China to focus on major theoretical and practical issues concerning socialist legal construction to push forward theoretical innovations in the rule of law, develop the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics that conforms to China's actual situation and reflects the law of social development and provide theoretical guidance and scholastic support for governing the country under the rule of law. These requirements are the baseline principles for the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics. If we abandon and concede these aspects, we will make disastrous mistakes and will not be able to recover from the resulting losses.

Compared with the Decisions that "we shall uphold the Party's leadership, ensure that the people become the masters of the country and govern the country under the rule of law" as they have been carried out since the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the above requirements positively clarify the basic principles for the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics and show more explicit and firmer stances and attitudes as well as more concrete and clearer connotations; however, they do not represent all aspects of the program. When writing Explanatory Notes for the Decisions, General Secretary Xi Jinping further noted: "We should uphold the Party's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and carry out the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics; these three aspects are the core essence of the socialist

rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics, they specify and ensure the institutional attributes and direction of the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics.”

We should note that “upholding the Party’s leadership” is mentioned first in the above requirements and core essence. This is because the rule of law needs a direction, and the Party’s leadership is the political guarantee for it.

Politics is the precondition for the rule of law, and the political direction determines the direction of the rule of law. No matter how far the rule of law is alleged to overstep politics, it is certainly based on a particular political ground. Socialist political development with Chinese characteristics fundamentally determines the goals, value and form of China’s social legal construction and the direction of the road towards socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

The legal construction that we stress serves the people’s interests; relies on, benefits and protects the people; and aims to ensure that the people become the masters of the country by developing socialism and achieving fairness and justice based on the people’s positions. Practicing the Party’s leadership in the overall process and various aspects of governing the country under the rule of law is the most fundamental guarantee of these functions. The people constitute the main body in governing the country under the rule of law, but the status of this main body cannot be truly guaranteed and changed into a real political force unless it is under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The people are the source of strength for governing the country under the rule of law, but this strength cannot be formidably organized and united unless it is under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

The reason that the leadership of the Communist Party of China can solve the deep-seated problems behind the institutions and laws lies in the nature and faith of the Party. Marxism tells us that the most important way to judge the nature of a political party consists in discovering whose interests are represented by its program and line. This method shows the Communist Party of China to be the truly advanced and outstanding political party. In this regard, Friedrich Engels explained that a new program is, after all, always a flag before the general public, and the general public judges the Party on the basis of it.⁵ Under the leadership of a political party that represents the general direction for social development and the people’s fundamental interests, the legal construction of Chinese society can be guided in the correct direction, and the rule of law is no longer discussed just as a theory.

Over the years, various views of constitutionalism have emerged in Chinese society. As long as the Communist Party of China vowed to observe the Constitution, uphold its authority and guarantee its implementation, some people immediately diverted the discussion towards constitutionalism with a view to silencing the Communist Party of China with remarks made by the Party itself. The Fourth Plenary Session of the Communist Party of China not only was convened with the theme of governing the country under the rule of law but also stressed that

⁵Marx and Engels (1995a).

to govern the country under the rule of law, the Party should first govern according to the Constitution; in order to hold power under the rule of law, the Party should first hold power according to the Constitution. Intriguingly, for a long time after this session, public views of constitutionalism were hardly heard. The reason was that the Communist Party of China firmly upholds and explicitly expounds the socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping said: “With respect to the road towards rule of law, we must release a correct and clear signal to the whole society and identify the correct direction for promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way as well as unifying the understanding and actions of the whole Party and the people of all nationalities across China.”⁶ The Communist Party of China has explained the principles, substance and determination regarding the socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics so clearly that it is embarrassed for having pretended not to know it and generating platitudes about constitutionalism.

3.3 *Distinctive Value Pursuit*

The rule of law is the most precious value pursuit in human society. We consider the rule of law to be one of the important core values of socialism, which shows a high esteem for its value. However, China is not governed under the rule of law for the sake of the rule of law; the value of the rule of law has never been, and cannot be, abstract but must be consistent with the goal of economic and social development, and that value is embodied in the practice of national governance, political development, social progress and the people’s happiness. Therefore, in present-day Chinese society, the governance of the country under the rule of law is an extremely concrete and clear value pursuit that was proposed during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China as follows: upholding the authority of the Constitution and laws, safeguarding the people’s rights and interests according to those laws, guaranteeing social fairness and justice, and safeguarding national security and stability.

- The authority of the Constitution and laws is the prerequisite for the rule of law.

The crucial sign of differentiating modern society under the rule of law from traditional society under the rule of law lies in the authority of the laws in society. In the course of human social development, many feudal emperors and monarchs, and even slave owners, have flaunted laws and created complete ranges of laws, but they abused those laws as tools for regulating others and as means for seeking personal gain. Laws had no authority and were inconsequential tricks and farces, so there were laws but no rule of law. Only with the entry into modern society have

⁶Xi (2014).

laws been designed based on imperial and monarchical power and become authoritative, thus providing the precondition for the rule of law.

To govern China under the rule of law, it is necessary to uphold the authority of laws and the authority of the Constitution as the origin and root of the laws. In this respect, when speaking at the meeting for people from all walks of life held in the capital to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the promulgation and implementation of the current Constitution, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly and resolutely noted: “Upholding the authority of the Constitution amounts to upholding the authority of the common will of the Party and the people; defending the dignity of the Constitution means defending the dignity of the common will of the Party and the people; guaranteeing the implementation of the Constitution is tantamount to guaranteeing the realization of the fundamental interests of the people.”

To uphold the authority of the Constitution and laws, it is necessary to regard the Constitution and laws as an integral whole, fully observe them, completely reflect their spirit, and not interpret them out of context merely to satisfy a particular need. At present, some social groups glibly stress the Constitution and laws but treat them casually—if the Constitution and laws fulfill their desires, they will volubly discuss them, for example, quoting the 13th Article of the Constitution: “The legal private property of citizens is inviolable”; if the Constitution and laws do not fulfill their desires, they will refuse to mention them and even prohibit others from discussing them, for example, refusing to uphold the 12th Article of the Constitution: “Public property in socialism is inviolable.” Ensuring that the legal private property of citizens is inviolable is the most basic requirement of a modern civilized society, which of course should be stressed; however, ensuring that public property in socialism is inviolable is an essential requirement of a socialist country that must be explained precisely to society and to citizens. This attitude, against which we must be vigilant, is obviously not designed to really uphold the authority of the Constitution and laws.

– The people’s rights and interests are fundamental to the rule of law.

When referring to the countries under the democratic system, Karl Marx emphasized that the people do not exist for laws but that laws exist for the people; here, laws are the people’s existence, while in other models, the people are a statutory existence.⁷ The countries under the democratic system may be highly diverse in type; however, the characteristic that the people are the masters of the country includes Chinese society among them. Therefore, the people’s rights and interests are not only the starting point but also the important source of action for the rule of law in China. We should ensure by law that all citizens enjoy extensive rights and that those rights, including personal rights, property rights and basic political rights, are inviolable. In this way, the economic, cultural, social and other rights of the citizens are guaranteed and supported. The manner of rule of law that excludes the

⁷Marx and Engels (2002).

overwhelming majority of the people and includes only a small number of elite groups is not politically legitimate in Chinese society and is bound not to be supported by the overwhelming majority of the people.

It is especially noted that if rights are not specific to individuals, it is hard to implement them, and if rights do not take into account the overall situation, their precondition will disappear. The socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics should ensure that the rights of every individual Chinese person are guaranteed and that the rights of groups are guaranteed first. If the status of the people as a whole in society cannot be practically recognized and guaranteed at the political level, the rights of individuals will be like water without a source and trees without roots. This is why the status of the people as the main body is an important principle on the road towards a socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

– Fairness and justice are the soul of the rule of law.

Fairness and justice are the basic conditions for the existence, operation, development and prosperity of a society and the most prominent value orientation of the rule of law. Failure to correct unfairness and injustice in the natural development of society has been a drawback of the rule of law because unfairness and injustice caused by legal arrangements and procedures are shameful occurrences under the rule of law. Such unfairness and injustice objectively exist in modern society. We explicitly vow to uphold social fairness and justice as the expectations and requirements for the rule of law.

Of course, at different levels of development, in different historical periods and among people with different mind-sets who belong to different classes, the understanding of and appeals for social fairness and justice are different. In Chinese society, which has entered a new normal form after several decades of rapid development and transformation, the most fundamental orientation of fairness and justice, which is concrete and real rather than abstract and unreal, consists in promoting common prosperity. Deng Xiaoping said: “The greatest superiority of socialism is common prosperity; this is the aspect that reflects the essence of socialism.”⁸ If fairness and justice are separated from common prosperity, they are not thorough; if fairness and justice do not focus on common prosperity, they are imperfect. In promoting the rule of law in China, it is essential to reflect this value requirement within the most basic institutional arrangement and the most fundamental legal design. Based on this approach, we should also justly address the appeals of the people according to laws and ensure that the people have access to fairness and injustice in every judicial case and that the people’s feelings, rights and interests are not harmed by unjust judgments.

– National security and stability are the basic values for the rule of law.

The rule of law targets order, while order gives rise to security. The rule of law is not and cannot be opposed to national and social security and stability. In particular,

⁸Biographical Chronicle of Deng (2004).

at present, the connotations and denotations of China's national security are richer, the temporal and spatial fields in China are wider, the internal and external factors are more complicated, and the challenges for safeguarding security and stability are greater than ever before. The governance of the country under the rule of law must provide a strong legal guarantee for the road towards national security with Chinese characteristics, which serves the overall national security and is aimed at guaranteeing the people's security. Moreover, governance under the rule of law is based on political and economic security; it is guaranteed by military, cultural and social security; and it relies on promoting international security; therefore, we should not talk abstractly about the value of the rule of law beyond history and reality. We should not be swayed by the view of the Western developed countries that "human rights override sovereignty". As a Chinese saying goes, a thing cannot exist without its basis. In the practical international environment, if there is no complete, comprehensive and strong national sovereignty as a guarantee, so-called human rights are only wishful thinking. Imagine the people who are vulnerable to turmoil in the international community; where are their human rights as guaranteed by the Western developed countries?

Upholding the authority of the Constitution and laws, safeguarding the people's rights and interests according to laws, guaranteeing social fairness and justice, and safeguarding national security and stability are the basic requirements for the policy design and institutional arrangements of the rule of law in China. Only in this way can the strategy for governing the country under the rule of law become a reliable legal guarantee for realizing Two Centenary Goals and the Chinese dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. A very specific and clear value requirement exists for the rule of law in Chinese society because "society is not based on laws." That is a fantasy of jurists. In contrast, laws should be based on society. Laws should be shared by society and should be manifested in the interests and needs generated by a certain material manner of production rather than arbitrarily trampled upon by individuals.⁹ The remark made by Karl Marx more than 100 years ago remains clear as a bell for contemporary Chinese society.

3.4 *Comprehensive Rule-of-Law System*

As early as the middle and late 1990s, the goal of building a socialist country under the rule of law was proposed during the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China; subsequently, the governance of the country under the rule of law was written into the Constitution as the basic strategy for the Party to lead the people in governing the country. Now that the strategy has been practiced for more than ten years, Chinese society has made tremendous strides towards governing the country under the rule of law. On March 10, 2011, when delivering the working

⁹Marx and Engels (1961).

report to the Fourth Session of the 11th National People's Congress, Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress, declared: "A socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics—which is based on China's national conditions and reality; caters to the needs of reform, opening up and socialist modernization; epitomizes the will of the Party and the people; is marshaled by the Constitution and includes the laws of various legal branches, including the Constitution-related laws, civil and commercial laws as the backbone; and consists of the laws and norms at various levels, including laws, administrative and local rules and regulations—has taken shape."¹⁰

However, the completion of the legal system does not amount to a transformation of the country into one that is governed under the rule of law, since the legal system alone is not enough. Promoting the rule of law in the country in an all-around way is a systematic project in which there are laws to abide by, and laws play a role in the whole process of economic and social development. Therefore, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China expanded the overall goal of promoting the rule of law in the country in an all-around way in two sentences, adding "building the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics" before "building the socialist country under the rule of law" and stating that the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics would consist of five systems—a complete legal and regulatory system, an efficient law enforcement system, a close-knit system of legal supervision, a rigorous system of legal guarantees, and a full-fledged system of Party rules and regulations. General Secretary Xi Jinping maintained that building the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics was the overall means: "As promoting the rule of law in the country in an all-around way involves many aspects, the practical work must be led by an all-inclusive means that is able to bring the various parties together, and this means the building of the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics. The work on various fronts concerning the governance of the country under the rule of law should be planned and pushed forward around this means."¹¹ Once these five systems have been established, the following major basic issues concerning the governance of the socialist country under the rule of law can be addressed: scientific legislation, strict enforcement of laws, judicial justice and observance of laws by the entire population and the regulation-based governance of the Party.

- Scientific legislation: the source for developing a complete legal and regulatory system.

In China, as of 2013, there were 243 laws in force, more than 680 administrative regulations in force that were issued by the State Council, and more than 8000 local regulations and other legislatively confirmed normative documents of a legal nature. The number is not small and is worthy of the name of a socialist legal system

¹⁰Wu (2011).

¹¹Xi (2014).

with Chinese characteristics. However, there is room for further improvement to the legal system. With economic and social development, laws must be continuously substantiated, revised, enriched and developed; the task of scientific legislation is arduous, and the road to scientific legislation is long. For example, we had to establish the overall outlook on national security; accelerate the legal construction for national security; lose no time in making a number of urgently needed laws such as the antiterrorism law; promote the rule of law in public security and build up the legal and institutional systems for national security; apply strict laws and regulations to protect the ecological environment; and accelerate the establishment of a legal system for an ecological civilization that effectively restricts developmental behaviors and promotes green development, cycle development and low-carbon development.

It should be especially noted that scientific legislation is reflected in observing the law of legislation; ensuring that laws and regulations are opportune, systematic, well-targeted and effective; reducing legislation costs and avoiding legislative waste; and applying the principles of justice, fairness and openness to the whole process of legislation. Furthermore, taking the correct and firm legislative stance, adhering to the philosophy of putting the people first and legislating for the people, and ensuring that all legislation conforms to the constitutional spirit reflect the people's will and are supported by the people.

- Strict enforcement of the laws: pacesetter for building an efficient law enforcement system.

The existence of laws is manifest, and the authority of the laws is upheld by law enforcement. The administrative organs at various levels in China are the important main bodies for enforcing laws and regulations. In fact, more than 80% of China's laws and regulations are enforced through the functional activities of the administrative organs. Such a law enforcement mode and state present very high requirements for strict enforcement of the laws by the administrative organs. Without such strict enforcement, it would be impossible to establish an efficient law enforcement system.

Strict enforcement of the laws is realized by intensifying the reform of the administrative law enforcement system; for example, a slew of institutional arrangements proposed during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China—the improvement of administrative law enforcement and of the mechanism for criminal judicial connections, the establishment and improvement of the benchmark system for administrative discretionary power and improvement of the mechanism for the correction of mistakes and accountability—were designed to institutionally check the powers of law enforcers so that laws are not suppressed by those in power, laws are not defied, mercy is not shown at the legal level, favoritism is not practiced and laws are not distorted. A further step based on institutional reform is the building of a government under the rule of law, which is the basic project for a strict enforcement of the laws and the formation of an efficient law enforcement system. Selective

enforcement of laws, rent-seeking and entrapment in enforcing the laws, arbitrary inflation of administrative powers and the random removal of governmental responsibilities are fundamentally attributable to incorrect positioning of the roles of the government. There will be a new starting point for the law enforcement system once there is a government based on a rule of law that is functionally scientific; that strictly enforces the laws; that is open, just, and not corrupt but efficient, law-abiding and trustworthy; and whose powers and responsibilities are defined by laws. In addition, the government must be scientifically positioned, power standardized and behaviors placed under the rule of law.

- Judicial justice: building the juridical baseline for the system of legal supervision.

Judicial justice is the last line of defense for safeguarding social fairness and justice. A close-knit legal supervisory system is indispensable for ensuring that the people have access to fair treatment and justice in every judicial case. The legal supervisory system is designed to require that there be no intervention in the judicature by those in power and that the plaintiff and the defendant are not exposed to judicial corruption. To ensure that there is no intervention by those in power, it is necessary to reinforce the system that ensures that judicial and prosecutorial power are exercised independently and justly according to the laws. Independence itself is the greatest supervision; in particular, when the recording, reporting and accountability system for intervention by leading cadres in judicial activities and case handling is established, the cadres who try to put their personal views above the laws, suppress laws with their power and bend the laws for personal gains will become fearful of intervening because they will be caught. Actions are being taken to promote the reform of a system of litigation that centers on judgment; to carry out a lifelong system of accountability regarding the quality of case handling and misjudged cases; to improve the legal system regarding the exercise of the right to supervision of prosecutorial organs; to reinforce legal supervision of criminal, civil and administrative actions; to improve the supervisor system; and to eliminate thorny problems such as showing mercy at the legal level and the handling of cases involving social connections, personal favors and money.

- Observance of laws by all people: consolidate the social foundation for the rule-of-law guarantee system.

Only when all people abide by the laws can a society really become one under the rule of law, while the observance of laws by the entire population cannot be achieved without a system that guarantees the rule of law. The first priority of this guarantee should be to ensure that the people have faith in the rule of law. The authority of laws originates from the people's sincere support and faith. Laws on paper do not necessarily work. Only laws deeply rooted in the people are powerful. How can laws be deeply rooted in the people, and how can we ensure that the people believe in the laws? Laws must benefit the people and truly guarantee their rights rather than controlling and restricting them. When the majority of people

believe that their rights can be fully guaranteed through the rule of law, and those rights not previously known by the people are obtained, enriched and expanded through the rule of law, the people will certainly believe in laws. Meanwhile, the foundation for the system that guarantees the rule of law should be consolidated. Undoubtedly, safeguarding legal rights by judicial means is very costly and is subject to red tape, and the ordinary people have no energy and time to file lawsuits. Many legal disputes and legal appeals can be settled through judicial procedures as long as multi-tiered and multi-field governance is conducted according to the laws and, in particular, if the governance of grassroots organizations, departments and industries under the rule of law is intensified; the self-discipline and self-management of various social players are supported; and scope is given to the active role of citizens' conventions, village and industrial rules and regulations, organizational constitutions and other social regulations in social governance. When this has been accomplished through the rule-of-law guarantee system, all of the people will naturally and loyally uphold, consciously observe and firmly defend the socialist rule of law, and all of the people will observe the laws.

- Regulation-based governance of the Party: the well-enhanced Party regulation system is the institutional foundation.

The Party's leadership is the most fundamental guarantee for the socialist rule of law. How can we ensure that the Party's leadership is fully reflected and guaranteed in the historical course of promoting the rule of law in the country in an all-around way? To forge iron, one must be strong. The political party shall cater to the requirements of governing the country under the rule of law in its line of thought and its members' behavior. In this process, it is necessary to first ensure that the Communist Party of China becomes a regulation-governed political party, as required by General Secretary Xi Jinping.

We will strengthen the building of the Party's regulations and systems to improve the institutions and systems for making the Party's regulations. Moreover, we will develop a complete Party regulatory system, apply the Party's regulations to manage its leading cadres and members and strengthen Party self-discipline, stimulate the Party's members and leading cadres to take the lead in observing national laws and regulations, and enhance the capability of the Party's leading cadres to follow the line of thought of the rule of law and to handle affairs according to the laws. In addition, we will raise the capability and level of the political party for governing the country under the rule of law.

The formation of a complete Party regulatory system must be based on the Party's Constitution. The Party's Constitution represents the overall regulations, principles and requirements. With further institutional refinement, the overall regulations, principles and requirements are carried out in practical governance by the political party. For example, in terms of guaranteeing the rights of the Party's members, developing democracy within the Party, reforming the personnel system, shoring up grassroots organizations, promoting style changes, regulating the exercise of powers, practicing strict Party discipline and reinforcing supervision

within the Party, a number of clearly targeted guiding and operable sub-regulations have been made based on the overall regulations of the Party's Constitution to further consolidate the institutional foundation for the Party's governance of the country under the rule of law.

Concluding Remarks

Practical logic first manifests the actual state. The governance of China under the rule of law is taking shape step by step and becoming mature and perfect by solving a range of problems. The people who have a prejudice against the rule of law in China can indulge in the utopia of the rule of law, but they cannot enter the real world. However, practical logic must also be applied to embody what the rule of law should look like. The governance of China under the rule of law will not and does not deviate from the basic law and the value of the rule of law. Emphasis on the nature of the rule of law and self-consciousness about the road towards a rule of law as well as an awareness of the functions of the rule of law reflect a conscious observance and utilization of the basic law that governs the rule of law. The combination of the actual state with what the rule of law should look like shapes the practical logic and opens a new era for governing China under the rule of law.

4 The Logic of the Rule of Law Behind the Core Substance

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China not only explicitly reaffirmed the commitment to unswervingly taking the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics but also expounded that road in detail. When making Explanatory Notes regarding the Decisions, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly stated that upholding the Party's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and carrying out the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics were the core substance of the socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics. Why do these aspects constitute the core substance, and what is the rule-of-law logic for this road? Provided that we can figure out these issues, we will be more conscious and confident in the socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

4.1 The Rule of Law Needs a Direction, and the Party's Leadership is the Political Guarantee for the Rule of Law

The rule of law has its own core substance—safeguarding the people's rights and achieving social fairness and justice. However, safeguarding the people's rights must not be merely empty talk; fairness and justice cannot be abstract rhetoric. The

nature and content of the rights of a person and the social group to which he or she belongs vary greatly with the person's and the group's political status in society. In society, the understanding of fairness and justice also varies greatly with the basic institutional attribute. In the final analysis, politics is the precondition for the rule of law, and the political direction determines the direction of that rule of law. No matter how far the rule of law is supposed to overstep politics, it is certainly rooted in a particular political soil. The socialist political development with Chinese characteristics fundamentally determines the goals, value and form of China's social legal construction as well as the direction for the socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

In China, a country with a population of 1.3 billion of whom the ordinary workers and farmers account for the majority, the legal construction must take the safeguarding of the people's fundamental rights and interests as its starting point and destination and ensure that the people enjoy extensive rights and freedom according to the laws and fulfill their bounden obligations. The mode of rule of law that excludes the overwhelming majority of people and includes only a small number of elite groups is not politically legitimate in Chinese society and is bound not to be supported by the overwhelming majority of the people. In particular, the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics must ensure that the rights of every Chinese person as an individual are guaranteed and that the rights of the groups behind the individuals are guaranteed first. If the status of the people as a whole in society cannot be practically recognized and guaranteed at the political level, the rights of individuals will be like water without a source and trees without roots. This is why the status of the people as the main body was proposed as an important principle in the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

In Chinese society which is undergoing great changes, vigorous development and profound adjustment of the social structure, safeguarding social fairness and justice is the greatest challenge and the greatest appeal. However, the most fundamental orientation of fairness and justice, which is concrete and real rather than abstract and unreal, consists in promoting common prosperity. Deng Xiaoping said: "The greatest superiority of socialism is common prosperity; this is one thing which reflects the essence of socialism." If fairness and injustice are separated from common prosperity, they are not thorough; if fairness and injustice do not focus on common prosperity, they are imperfect.

The Party's leadership of the whole process and of various aspects of the governance of the country under the rule of law is the most fundamental guarantee for ensuring that the legal construction serves the people's interests and relies on, benefits and protects the people; that the people become the master of the country; and that developing socialism and realizing fairness and justice are based on the people's position. The people are the main body in the governance of the country under the rule of law, but unless this main body is under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, it cannot correctly play its role and manage state and social affairs and economic and cultural undertakings by various ways and means according to the laws. The people are the source of strength for governing the

country under the rule of law, but this strength cannot be formidably organized except under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

Why do we have such high expectations for the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and how can the Party's leadership solve the deep-seated problems behind the institutions and laws? The answer lies in the nature and faith of the Party. Marxism tells us that the most important way of judging the nature of a political party consists in discovering whose interests are represented by its program and line. Thousands of political parties are available in the world, but only the Communist Party of China has enshrined the idea that it serves "no special interests of its own" in its Constitution; only the members of the Communist Party of China can dare to say that they are the people made of special materials; and only the Communist Party of China works towards the goal of a communist society in which the people's freedom and all-around development are achieved. These aspects cannot be achieved by any other political party, and no other political party is prepared to do so. This situation indicates that the Communist Party of China is the most advanced and outstanding political party.

Under the leadership of a political party that represents the general direction for social development and for the people's fundamental interests, the legal construction of Chinese society can be guided in the correct direction, and the rule of law is no longer discussed merely for its own sake.

4.2 The Rule of Law Cannot Be Separated from the Institutional Environment, and the Socialist System with Chinese Characteristics Is the Institutional Guarantee for the Rule of Law

The rule of law is the important support for the national governance system and capacity, and it governs the country by offering an institutional plan. Therefore, the rule of law incorporates the existing social institutional framework and safeguards and improves the social system instead of denying and disrupting it. Without a particular social system, the rule of law will lose the foundation on which its operation is based. Without the social system, the rule of law will become unfit. For legal construction in today's Chinese society, this institutional foundation is the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.

The socialist system with Chinese characteristics is a complete interconnected institutional system that is the result of several decades of self-improvement and development of the socialist system in the economic, political, cultural and social fields as well as in other fields. This system covers the fundamental political system; the basic political system; the basic economic system; and specific systems based on the fundamental political system, the basic political system and the basic economic system, including the economic, political, cultural and social systems; moreover, this system includes the socialist legal system with Chinese

characteristics. Different types of systems at different levels play their respective roles and coordinate with each other; they determine China's state system and its system of government, the basic state form and the basic social structure. In addition, they promote the development of the socialist undertaking with Chinese characteristics.

The internal mechanism and operational mode of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics determine that the system can develop a powerful will of unification and organizational strength; put various forces in place across the country as a whole; organize and mobilize all economic, political and social resources; make the people at various levels unite and work together to overcome difficulties; and rapidly and efficiently respond to emergencies and fulfill tasks. The socialist system with Chinese characteristics takes all factors into consideration, seeks common points while reserving differences, and creates a broad institutional space. It also provides an effective institutional guarantee for eliminating factors that are unfavorable to giving scope to the people's enthusiasm, removing the undesirable phenomena that prevent social groups from innovating and advancing, fostering an atmosphere and environment in which various forces play their roles, and fully arousing the enthusiasm and creativity of various social strata and social groups. In promoting the rule of law in China in an all-around way, the rule of law is put into practice more vigorously and effectively and gives more scope to the superiority of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics rather than facing others as an equal and making a new start.

We emphasize upholding the socialist system with Chinese characteristics because it is necessary to ensure that the rule of law is internally consistent with the institutions. The institutions within the same system must be logically consistent, and the institutions among different systems cannot simply be introduced; otherwise, conflicts and offsets among institutions will occur. Such conflicts not only invalidate the institutions but also severely affect their authority and reason for existence. If we indiscriminately imitate the multi-party rotating type of governance, separation of powers and two-chamber system in the rule-of-law system in Western society, the system will be unable to address issues in China and may even result in disasters that will cause disorder in our institutional system and social chaos.

The socialist system with Chinese characteristics can become successful in Chinese society because it is a product of natural evolution rather than a design, and it is an endogenous rather than an exogenous system. The socialist system with Chinese characteristics does not feature an institutional "great leap forward", an abstract concept of institutional utopia; instead, it is based on the profound mastery and utilization of social developmental law, on a clear understanding of the developmental stage of Chinese society and on the vivid practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as is the rule of law in China. Only when efforts focus on improving the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics is relied on will the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics become wider.

4.3 The Road Shall Be Properly Dealt with Through Reason, and the Socialist Rule-of-Law Theory with Chinese Characteristics Is the Theoretical Support for the Rule of Law

Mao Zedong said: “Practice will give birth to reason.”¹² As China’s road is taken, China’s reason will certainly come into being. China shall contribute not only its road but also its reason to the world. The socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics is the theoretical innovation in the rule of law that is made by proceeding from China’s basic national condition, adapting to the intensification of the reform and opening up, summarizing and applying the successful experience of the Party’s leadership of the people to carry out the rule of law and involving major theoretical and practical issues concerning socialist legal construction. The socialist theory of rule of law conforms to China’s reality, has Chinese characteristics and embodies the law of social development. Therefore, the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics is the theoretical guide and support for the socialist rule-of-law system with Chinese characteristics and the guide for action to promote the rule of law in the country in an all-around way. The socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics aims to overcome the practical difficulties in legal construction and to enhance confidence in China’s road towards the rule of law instead of merely draping itself in the flag to impress people.

For example, the understanding of the relationship between the governance of the country under the rule of law and the governance of the country by virtue under the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics makes the latter more comprehensive and scientific.

In the opinion of some people, it is unnecessary and inopportune to discuss virtue against the general background of governing the country under the rule of law. This view is entirely wrong. First, the rule of law opposes the rule of man rather than the rule of virtue; more importantly, if no foundation in virtue and value consensus exists, the rule of law is nothing but wishful thinking, and the country’s system of governance is a castle in the air.

Generally, virtue refers to the civilization, spirit, value, faith and norms developed by a country, a society and a person during development, progress, evolution and growth. The way of thinking, behavioral pattern, value judgment and goal pursuit vary with virtue. In modern society, the economic, political and social functions of virtue are increasingly prominent and have become important tools and means in scrambling for resources, attracting people and discrediting competitors as well as the ultimate weapon for legitimacy and legality. When the whole world recognizes a value outlook and considers a behavior a so-called virtue, thereby attributing to it the highest good and legitimacy, this behavior will occupy the

¹²Mao Zedong, Speech in the Second Session of the 8th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Mao (1992, p. 206).

commanding height of virtue and concentrate all its resources on developing a universal sense of superiority, even in its realization. People in Western society label their values that have merely local significance as “universal values” with a view to selling their behavioral patterns and associated institutional modes—namely, the method of production and lifestyle of capitalist society—to the world.

Therefore, national and social governance call for the combined action of laws and virtue. For national and social governance, the rule of law and the rule of virtue supplement each other and are indispensable, like two wheels of a vehicle or two wings of a bird. The rule of law regulates the behavior of members of society with its authority and necessity, while the rule of virtue governs the character of members of society with its constraining and admonishing force. Equal emphasis is placed on the rule of law and the rule of virtue, with scope given to the role of laws in regulation and the role of virtue in indoctrination. The rule of law reflects the philosophy of virtue and reinforces the role of laws in promoting virtue construction, while virtue cultivates the spirit of the rule of law and strengthens the role of virtue in supporting the rule-of-law culture so that laws and virtue supplement and complement each other, which is the correct way to modernize national governance.

Moreover, the aspect of the socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics concerning proceeding from China’s reality and learning and drawing upon the outstanding achievements of a rule-of-law civilization in the world makes us more self-conscious and confident of the socialist rule-of-law road with Chinese characteristics.

Chinese society is different from Western society in its developmental course, path, conditions and results. These differences certainly lead to other differences: different value judgments, behavioral preferences, ways of thinking, skills and qualities, including different roads leading to the rule of law. The socialist road towards the rule of law with Chinese characteristics is not something that falls from the sky but is a fundamental achievement of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people obtained through great efforts and at a heavy price. In this sense, “characteristics” are instinct and necessity rather than an excuse.

The socialist theory of rule of law with Chinese characteristics will and has shed light on these reasons. The road enriches reasons, while reasons assist the road. With benign interaction between theory and practice, the road to the rule of law in China will certainly become wider.

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Chapter 5

Strategic Support: Comprehensively Strengthen Party Discipline

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party has been built up under a very clear theme: strengthening Party self-discipline. In December 2014, when inspecting Jiangsu Province, General Secretary Xi Jinping added the word “comprehensively” before “strengthening Party self-discipline”. This addition is crucial and necessary. As early as the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping stressed that the Party should exercise self-discipline. More than 30 years have elapsed, many problems that Deng Xiaoping faced have not yet been solved and other problems that Deng Xiaoping did not encounter have appeared that are even more severe and complicated. Against this background, to ensure that strict Party self-discipline is truly exercised, it is necessary to comprehensively strengthen it. Only when Party self-discipline is comprehensively strengthened can it be exercised.

Comprehensively strengthening Party self-discipline should begin with changing its style: an anti-corruption campaign should be launched to boost it; the institutions should serve as its guarantee; faith should shape its soul; action should begin with small things and move to great events; and from outside to inside, both symptoms and root causes should be treated, the foundation should be consolidated and vitality should be cultivated to build a new normal for the Communist Party of China.

1 Keep the Lifeline of the Political Party

To implement the requirements specified during the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China for maintaining the advanced level and purity of the Party by carrying out, in a profound and ongoing way, educational and practical activities concerning the Party’s mass line, highlighted by benefits for the people, pragmatism and absence of corruption in the whole Party, solutions to the prominent problems that are the subject of strong complaints by the people, and

enhancement of the capability to do the mass work under the new situation, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China decided to take about one year beginning from the second half of 2013 to carry out these activities in batches throughout the entire Party. It is a major decision that the Party should exercise self-discipline and that it should be strict with its members under the new situation; it is a major arrangement designed to maintain the Party's advanced level and purity and consolidate its governance foundation and status; it is a major measure that conforms to the new expectations of the people and promotes the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Three major actions give prominence to the significance and status of the practical educational activities and present higher requirements for carrying out those activities.

1.1 Figure Out Who the Masses Are and How to Contact Them

Experience and lessons learned over the years tell us that the implementation of practical educational activities is both important and difficult. To substantively and fittingly carry out the practical educational activities concerning the mass line, it is necessary first to have a clear mind. Therefore, determining the basic issue of "who the masses are and how to contact them" is the first lesson of these activities.

Who are the masses, and where are they? Everyone in Chinese society believes that he or she knows the answer to this question. Is this true? As a philosophical saying goes, knowing well does not mean really knowing.

A leading cadre from a ministry said: "If there were no masses, there would not be any votes; if there were no votes, there would be no progress, so I paid great attention to contacting the masses". A cadre from a local authority said: "If there were no bosses, there would be no purses, and nothing can be done without money, so I should often contact them."

Are these acts of contacting the masses? It seems undeniable, but it also seems that something is wrong. Such plausibility occurs because contacting the masses cannot be taken for granted, and the following three characteristics define true contact with the masses.

First, the overwhelming majority of the people: the masses must be the overwhelming majority of groups in Chinese society.

For Party members and cadres, the true masses are the groups involved within their range of responsibility. For Party members and cadres working at the central state organs, the masses are the people across the country; for Party members and cadres working in provinces, cities, and counties, the masses are the people in their respective areas. The masses are not merely a small number of people in the compounds of the state organs and their respective departments along with wealthy employers and merchants.

It is easy for some Party members and cadres to consider contact with a small number of people and those in small circles as contact with the masses because building connections within small circles can yield quick results; in particular, in the existing system of social operations, a small number of people have the economic ability to take action. For example, if one person receives 100 million yuan, that person becomes rich, will feel deeply grateful and will even offer a kickback; if that amount is shared by 1.3 billion people, everyone obtains less than one cent and may have no feeling about it at all.

The state has reduced and remitted the agricultural tax and developed a new rural cooperative medical system, which are good deeds for the country and the people; however, few people now believe that they are good, and many make cynical remarks about them. Why? For 600 million farmers, these acts are a good thing, but an individual farmer, if he has only several hundred yuan, cannot afford to postpone the work on hand to sing the praises of the government in the streets, even if the government gives out this money early on. The people who are no longer able to concoct various pretexts to gain extra advantages and benefits are very unhappy and are prone to noisily overstating things, and platforms and channels exist that make it easy for them to publicize their cynical remarks.

Of course, the cadres of the Communist Party of China hope that the masses praise what they do, but they should not do things just for that reason. The members of the Communist Party of China cannot be businessmen, even in the case of casting accounts; they must consider the overall economic and social development and progress and cannot be content with empty honeyed words from a small number of people who obtain benefits because of them.

Therefore, the masses are absolutely not small groups and small circles; building connections in small circles is detrimental to the masses and is the opposite to making contact with them. Even if an overwhelming majority of people sometimes exists in a local area or region, these people should be objectively analyzed to ensure vigilance against mistaking a part for the whole. The “majority” of the people in a local area cannot be considered the true majority of the people.

Second, common interests: the masses are synonymous with common interests.

In Western society, the masses are often described as the rabble, the mob, or at best the general public. The interests are often the interests of isolated individuals or of a certain class or group.

The masses is a special term in Marxist politics that represents the political integration of social classes and strata. Therefore, in Chinese society, the masses means every individual in social life and the concept of the largest common collective in social political discourse. This is a major difference between Chinese society and Western society.

If this definition is not recognized, Party members and cadres will be trapped in a vicious cycle of struggling to satisfy the interests of different elements of the masses at different times and attending to one thing and missing another, thus failing to obtain good results and possibly causing more problems while becoming exhausted.

In regard to the masses, it is necessary to envision both the trees and the forest. Party members and cadres who cannot satisfy the specific and separate interests of

the masses are incompetent, but those who fail to understand the common interests and who guide and assemble social groups under common interests will be hoist with their own petard in minor cases and satisfy others without gaining any benefit, thus ruining our cause.

General Secretary Xi Jinping once described the Chinese dream by quoting a famous saying by Ouyang Xiu (960–1127), one of the eight greatest Chinese poets of the Tang and Song Dynasties: The finer details fall into place when they are aligned with the bigger picture. This saying offers a great inspiration for us to identify and understand the masses. It is difficult to identify and safeguard the common interests in a transformational society that includes many different interests, but it is quite useful and urgent. Without the common interests, there would be no common cause or common dream, and the masses could not be united. When the common interests are realized, the differentiated interests will naturally fall into place. Therefore, the remark made by the General Secretary that “only when the country and nation are good can all the people be good” is of great significance. “All the people” are our masses, and the masses are all the people from various classes and strata.

Third, direction for progress: the masses are the main historical body that represents the direction for social development and progress.

At present, some Party members and cadres are eager to contact the wealthy and the employers, and this approach is not considered wrong. At the primary stage of socialism, it is good for the wealthy and the employers to pour their money into promoting economic development, and they are an important part of the masses, as we have mentioned.

However, the people, science and technology are the productive forces, while capital cannot be considered a productive force. Therefore, in a socialist society, fundamentally, the main body of the masses must be the socialist workers. At the primary stage of socialism, the active role of capital is not rejected, and the builders of socialism objectively exist; however, the builders of socialism will sooner or later actively become socialist workers. With respect to correctly handling the relationships between labor and capital, between workers and builders, it is not necessary for members of the Communist Party of China to act in a disguised manner and put the incidental before the fundamental.

The summarization of these three characteristics shows that the masses are the overwhelming majority of the people who represent the direction for progress and share the common interests. In contacting the masses, we cannot consider a part representative of the whole and place the unimportant before the important. We should adopt these criteria to check whether we actually are contacting the masses when we attempt to do so. It is highly problematic to take it for granted that we have represented the masses; this is the biggest problem currently existing among some Party members and cadres.

Some people may argue: Do Party members and cadres exist occupy a space outside the scope of the masses? Are not Party members and cadres part of the masses? These are good questions. There is a dialectical relationship among Party members, cadres and the masses. Essentially, Party members and cadres are part of

the masses and originally come from the masses; however, Party members and cadres are not the masses in terms of the Party's nature but are the advanced personnel provided with faith. Party members and cadres are part of the masses in terms of enjoying the same economic, cultural and political rights as the masses—Party members and cadres have no special rights or powers except the right to serve the people. However, Party members and cadres are not part of the masses since they should dare to take on responsibilities and become the first to make contributions. Party members and cadres do not lose their position in relation to the masses and shirk their broad obligations. They are positioned as both a part of and not a part of the masses and have a fish-out-of-water relationship rather than an oil-and-water relationship with the masses; such a position and relationship objectively determine the necessity for and possibility of Party members and cadres contacting the masses.

1.2 Make the Practical Educational Activities Focus on the Improvement of the Working Style

The key to the practical educational activities is practice, which means problem solving. To solve problems, breakthroughs and entry points are necessary, and these lie in combating dysfunctional styles. In solving problems, it is necessary to address the principal contradictions and the main aspect of contradictions with the improvement of the working style as the main task.

The working style results from the externalization of the Party's nature and tenets and directly and thoroughly reflects the Party's attitude towards the masses. For more than 90 years, the working style has been the pride and the hallmark of the Communist Party of China; however, over the period of governance, some dysfunctional styles have emerged, including formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance.

What is formalism? A mountain of paperwork and a sea of meetings, hankering after an undeserved reputation, practicing fraud, and performing work that is not solid. Some have depicted formalism as follows: plans are developed in large numbers, are spoken and heard, but are never carried out; goals and requirements are often renewed and only specified in documents and reports; and work appears lively, but the actual problems are not solved. In the worst cases, combating formalism evolves into a new type of formalism. In earlier learning and practical educational activities, formalism occurred. This time, we had to avoid formalism in the practical educational activities.

What is bureaucratism? Mao Zedong once identified 20 types of bureaucratism, such as standing high above the masses; being ignorant; compelling and ordering others; being empty-headed, disoriented and obsessed with trifles; adopting a bureaucratic attitude; and being muddle-headed and incompetent, silly, useless and lazy. All of these phenomena appear, overtly or covertly, to varying degrees in some present-day members and cadres. Some leading cadres are inaccessible to the

masses and put on airs, pretending to possess knowledge and competence that they do not really have; some believe that they are smarter than the masses and reverse the relationship, becoming accustomed to making indiscreet remarks or criticisms against the masses; and some think they hold a high academic degree, have acquired much knowledge, know everything and are omnipotent. Regarding these phenomena, Mao Zedong gave an early warning: If Party cadres are not passionate, not approachable by the masses, have no desire to acquire knowledge, behave haughtily and do not become willing pupils, they certainly will fail to accomplish their goals and govern in a better way.¹

What are hedonism and extravagance? It is unnecessary to mention these problems because the nature of the Communist Party of China determines that its members fundamentally lack hedonism and extravagance. However, at present, cases of cadres indulging in a life of pleasure and comfort, making merry, being extravagant and dissipated, and squandering wantonly are too many to enumerate. For example, in some areas, the primary school buildings are dilapidated, while the government buildings are magnificent; the ordinary people struggle to find sufficient food and clothing, while some cadres indulge in pomp and dissipation, grant themselves generous benefit packages, drive luxury cars, own a number of houses, and incur astronomical public expenses; the “cadre economy” even occurs in some areas. What is the “cadre economy”? In an impoverished county, if cadres at the county level are not among the consumers, all consumption, even in the service industry in this area, collapses. This result shows that the cadres’ consumption is an important pillar for stimulating economic development. Extravagance accounts for this absurd phenomenon.

Compared with the advanced level and purity of the Communist Party of China, this phenomenon is at most like the dust on a jewel or a spot in the sun; however, the masses perceive and begrudge this corrupt style. If sweeping efforts are not made to remove this dysfunctional style, troubles will multiply and disasters will occur.

What are the solutions? Strong determination is required. It is essential to concentrate forces and clarify tasks to launch a battle against this dysfunctional style, to effectively curb its spread and to create favorable conditions for solving other problems within the Party.

1.3 Practice the Spirit of Rectifying Incorrect Work Styles to Carry Out Criticism and Self-criticism

The practical educational activities are based on practice, and the difficulty for these activities consists in putting them into practice. Practice is not empty talk; on the contrary, it is concrete action.

¹Mao (1991)

A political party cannot be infallible, and a cadre cannot be immune to making mistakes. For the Communist Party of China, a political party that has governed the country for more than 60 consecutive years and is eligible to continue governing the country, drawbacks and mistakes are unavoidable. Such errors are not disastrous—as long as criticism and self-criticism are upheld, we can check erroneous ideas at the outset, take precautions and mitigate problems with effective solutions.

Criticism and self-criticism are part of the consistent traditional style of the Communist Party of China and are important weapons for purifying the Party's organization and the thoughts of its members and cadres; they are also important elements in resolving contradictions and promoting democracy within the Party and are an important sign that it transcends and is different from other political parties. Comrade Mao Zedong likened criticism and self-criticism to the removal of dust, looking into the mirror and washing one's face, and he considered them effective ways to prevent erosion caused by political microorganisms.

In recent years, criticism and self-criticism have increasingly abated within the Communist Party of China. The members of the Party are afraid that troubles will occur if they criticize their superiors, that harmony will be destroyed if they criticize other members at the same level, that votes will be lost if they criticize their inferiors, and that they will lose face if they perform self-criticism. Therefore, the superiors are kind to their inferiors; the inferiors pander to their superiors; and, as mentioned in the documents issued by the central leadership, the members curry favor with and flatter each other. As a result, amidst perfect harmony, contradictions become increasingly acute, and more and more problems occur that cannot be solved overnight. As a famous political saying goes, when constructive criticisms disappear, disruptive criticisms are on the horizon.

Criticism and self-criticism within the Party are not designed to attack and lash out at each other for personal gain, to vent personal spite, or to label others at will. However, we cannot avoid them, dwell on the trivial, make left-handed compliments, and vulgarize life within the Party. To rectify misconduct, it is necessary to criticize and self-criticize. Rectifying the incorrect styles of work is an important weapon for maintaining the advanced level and purity of the Communist Party of China. This weapon cannot always be shelved; it is time to use it.

We should revive the soul of the Party by rectifying the incorrect styles of work, convening democratic meetings and opening the door to new activities. Faith in Marxism, socialism and communism is the political soul of the members of the Communist Party of China. However, many current members have lost faith in communism; they have joined the Party organizationally but are not prepared to align themselves with its thoughts. We should alert these members by telling them: You are dangerous; if you do not undergo a self-revolution in your soul, you are doomed to suffer a revolution that will be launched by the masses.

We should also rectify the incorrect styles of work to change the vested interests, learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and “cure the sickness to save the patient”. A number of phenomena and behaviors that are contradictory to the Party's nature have occurred during the Party's lifetime because of improper interests. As early as 1979, Deng Xiaoping said: “If cadres seek personal privileges,

they will certainly be separated from the masses. If the Party's members excessively address their own personal interests and those of their families, they will have less desire and energy to address those of the masses and, at least formally, do some things that they must do. Now a small number of the Party's members stand high above the masses; some things done by them are indeed absurd! They are isolated from the masses and cadres, and the behavior of those inferior in status follows the behavior of those above them, spoiling the general mood of the society.”²

What should be done? Leave no room to repeat misconduct, do not consider misconduct excusable, address violations of the Constitution based on the Party's disciplinary methods and handle violations of the national laws according to the laws. If there is dust, remove it; if there is disease, treat it. If suppuration and ulceration occur, amputation should be conducted where necessary so that the healthy body is not infected. For the Communist Party of China, corruption is like the dust on a jewel rather than the cancer in genes. Corruption is committed by some Party members and cadres rather than the whole Party. Not all members of the Communist Party of China are corrupt. Combating corruption will not lead to the collapse of the Party; on the contrary, it will make the Party stronger, cleaner, more cohesive and more appealing. Therefore, when combating corruption, we should not fear that the Party will crumble to dust; when a corrupt member is found, no mercy should be shown. An attitude and determination that the Party will expel all corrupt members must be expressed in the whole Party and the whole society so that Party members will not risk participating in corrupt practices. If we are unwilling to punish corrupt members and allow them to “kidnap” the Party, the Party's image will be damaged and its survival will be threatened.

Only when the requirement for honesty and integrity is practically carried out can the requirement of serving the people and being pragmatic be fully implemented.

1.4 Fundamentally, Put the Masses First

Contacting the masses is repeatedly stressed. Putting the masses first is fundamental. The masses are not sophisticated, kind and affectionate; they are very straightforward, sensitive and highly intolerant of misconduct. The masses are able to clearly judge whether Party members are sincere or insincere. If Party members become sincere, the following objects can be achieved so that Party members can be recognized by, supported by and win the affection of the masses.

- Sincerely contact the masses. The masses are the creators of history. Without the masses, there would be no historical progress. The masses create social materials and spiritual wealth and determine social changes. This is the basic principle of Marxism and the historical experience summarized by the Communist

²Deng (1994b), p. 218

Party of China. In the Huaihai Campaign, the Communist Party of China mobilized a 0.6-million-strong army to defeat the 0.8-million-strong army led by the Kuomintang. That was a miracle in the history of war, but we should not forget that it was supported by a mass of 5.43 million people. The side supported by those 5.43 million people would surely win, and in that campaign, they sided with the Communist Party of China.

Therefore, we should realize that contacting the masses is the weapon for carrying out all work, and maintaining flesh-and-blood contact with the masses is our source of strength. Once we bare our hearts, our feelings will find a perfect response. Once we bear the masses in mind, so will they bear us in mind. Once we regard the masses as relatives, so will they regard us as relatives. When we are truly accessible to the masses, we will deeply feel their amazing strength and greatness. As long as the masses serve as the backup force, we can overcome all kinds of difficulties. We must keep this in mind: What really makes us powerful is the strength of the masses rather than our powers.

- Sincerely communicate with the masses. The masses will not care how much land we cultivate for them at the grassroots level, but they will take note of whether we are sincere in cultivating that land. We should not skim the surface, as does the passerby, and we should not act as government inspectors with empty talk. We should not become sightseers who collect literary material and seek novelty. We should become part of the masses to share their weal and woe. With the passing of time, we will build a strong relationship with the masses, and true feelings will emerge after all have come together through thick and thin.

We should not discuss the so-called “specialization of work” before the masses. The most basic work of Party members and cadres lies in contacting and moving towards the masses. We should listen to the voice of the masses and understand their appeals, which cannot be heard or known in our offices. Therefore, going deep into the grassroots units among the masses, sharing food and accommodation with them and striving to understand their appeals is also the work, even the most important work, of Party members and cadres. Party members and cadres should leave their offices and meeting rooms, reduce their paperwork and number of meetings, and go into the fields, worksites, factories and mines to have more contact at the grassroots level; in doing so, they will better serve the masses. Once the grassroots units are viewed as the frontier for cultivating the cadres, the cadres can be guided to enhance the relationship with the masses and the capability of serving the masses by sincere interaction with them.

- Truly serve the masses. Mao Zedong said, during the 7th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: “The masses choose their leadership tool and leader from practice. If the chosen people consider themselves terrific and believe that they are great men rather than consciously serve as the tool, those people are wrong. To make the people victorious, our party should consciously

serve as the tool. ... This is a materialistic historical outlook.”³ During the 8th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Deng Xiaoping more explicitly stated: “The political party of the working class does not take the masses as its own tool but consciously considers itself the tool for the masses to finish particular historical tasks in a particular historical period.”⁴ Serving as the tool for the masses to realize their interests and accomplish their cause does not disgrace the Communist Party of China; on the contrary, it is the Party’s pride and, moreover, reflects its greatness. Once the tool is isolated from its user, it cannot work. Once there is no object of the tool’s service, the tool will become useless. The significance of the Party’s existence consists in wholeheartedly serving the people. If the Party does not serve the masses, its existence is not necessary. In the present day, some Party members consider the leadership core opposed to the tool; they argue: How can the Party serve as the tool when it is the leadership core? Therefore, they place more emphasis on leadership and less on service. This approach is absolutely wrong.

Of course, serving the masses is not and cannot be empty talk. To serve the masses, it is necessary to first satisfy their interest appeals. The masses’ production and life; their realization of emerging from poverty and becoming better off; and their rights, interests, difficulties, hardships and worries may seem to be minor matters, but these matters are associated with the immediate vital interests of the masses. If these matters are not opportunely addressed, they will affect more important matters and might even cause huge mistakes. As long as Party members truly work for the masses, they can provide many services that the masses need. Scope is given to Party members and cadres to take subjective initiative to address the matters that are of immediate interest to the masses. Policies are improved, institutional innovations and system improvements are made, and the mechanisms to create conditions for fundamentally solving the problems of the masses are optimized. When all of these goals are accomplished, the masses will certainly support our work.

2 Continue to Combat Corruption and Uphold the Integrity of the Road Towards Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Comprehensively strengthening Party discipline and continuing to combat corruption and uphold the integrity of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics are naturally essential. Continuously exploring, enriching and improving the fight against corruption and upholding the integrity of the road

³Mao (1996).

⁴Deng (1994a)

towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a bounden duty for every member of the Communist Party of China. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China institutionally arranged to combat corruption and uphold the integrity of the road by stating that it is necessary to use institutions to check powers, manage affairs and supervise personnel, accept power supervision from the masses, and operate in the open; this is the fundamental policy for containing the powers within the institutions. It is essential to build a system of power operations on scientific decision making, resolute execution and vigorous supervision; to improve the fight against corruption and the system of preventing it; and to ensure that cadres are honest and upright, the government is not corrupt and politics is clean.

2.1 Foster Idealism in Combating Corruption and Upholding Integrity

Combating corruption is an issue that both Chinese and Western politicians must face during development. However, different roads towards political development determine the respective countermeasures; in contrast to the theory of checks and balances in Western politics, combating corruption and upholding the integrity of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics are based on the advanced level and purity of the Party and emphasize self-purification, self-improvement, self-innovation and self-enhancement. In such a political ecology, eliminating corruption and promoting the idealism of Party members is fundamental.

Such idealism is reflected first in zero toleration of corruption: corruption and honesty are like fire and ice. Where functions and powers are abused to seek improper gain, the penalty based on laws varies with the amount of such improper gain, but the determination of corruption does not vary. If we do not adopt a clear attitude towards corruption, unspoken rules will take root in the society, and the phenomenon of “bad money driving out good money” will occur in political life. Many members and cadres of the Party have said that if you are not corrupt, if you cannot make vigorous efforts to turn a situation into an opportunity for corruption, you will even become a loner and fail to sustain your identity. This suggestion is horrible.

Therefore, in dealing with corruption, we should not consider the relationship between the overall situation and small matters or the tradeoff between the primary and secondary aspects, and we should not leave room for further misconduct. In this regard, refraining from stressing the dialectics is the greatest dialectic. For the sake of the Party’s image among the people and its true honor, we must take action, even over-corrective action, to make clear to society that the Party is as incompatible with corruption as fire is with water. For some issues to which the masses pay attention, using a steam hammer to crack nuts is a declaration of the political

attitude. A clear-cut attitude and strong determination to combat corruption do not constitute the whole work of combating it, but they represent the first step.

We have confidence in such idealism, which is realistic because it is originally rooted in the essence of the Communist Party of China. The Marxist faith, the communist faith and the tenet of wholeheartedly serving the people—attributes of a Marxist political party—determine that the Communist Party of China is not compatible with corruption. A corrupt cadre once bitterly said: “As long as the Communist Party of China governs the country, the money coming from corruption must always be buried, while the most painful experience after corruption is the deliberate concealment of the extravagance.” This is because for the Communist Party of China, corruption is like dust on a jewel rather than cancer in genes: as long as the jewel is frequently cleaned, it will remain crystal-clear and dazzling.

Therefore, to eliminate corruption, the Communist Party of China should begin from the heart to carry forward its faith and develop an awareness among Party members so that each Party member can consciously remain honest. As a Chinese saying goes, it is easy to catch the thieves on a mountain, but it is hard to catch the thieves of the heart. However, when the thieves on a mountain are caught, the thieves of the heart will naturally disappear. The same concept applies to corruption.

While stressing faith and awareness, we do not deny the importance of combating corruption at the institutional level. There is an interesting view in institutional economics that ideology is an important part of institutions; the concepts of people’s recognition of the institutions—such as awareness, loyalty and dedication—can reduce the costs of institutional operations and ensure that institutions are more easily implemented and become more efficient.

Some people say that anti-corruption efforts cannot be thorough due to institutional loopholes; laws and regulations must be quickly and aggressively supplemented to plug these loopholes. This theory sounds feasible, but it is not the case in practice. Even if this problem is solved, there is a more deep-seated problem. According to the research on institutional philosophy, institutions can be refined, but it is impossible to infinitely refine them. After all, institutions are governed by a limit—no institution can deny a certain discretionary power exercised by the people who follow it; moreover, institutions, no matter how strict, may be regarded as meaningless by some people. This is the case in exploiting the loopholes, as is often mentioned in the present day. Karl Marx quoted an economist: “If capital can get a 50% profit, it will lead to positive audacity; 100% will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300%, and there is not a crime at which it will wonder, nor a risk it will not run, even to chance its owner being hanged.”⁵ In society, this is the case for those in power who can gain more than 300% profit amidst all the temptations.

⁵Marx (2004).

2.2 Attach Importance to Prevention

The Communist Party of China overwhelmingly combats corruption, but it does not consider a great achievement in combating corruption gratifying. The downfall of Party members and cadres is a tragedy for it and a loss to the Party's leading group, not to mention the loss of the social wealth caused by corruption. If prevention is conducted through scientific and effective means that will allow no further corruption, no great effort to combat corruption will be necessary.

A number of ways, methods and institutional arrangements are put into place to prevent the risk of corruption in the operations of power so that no corrupt behaviors occur or so that they occur less often; this is the fundamental solution for combating corruption and a law-oriented approach to tackling it. Since the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, we have often stressed that the Party should pay more attention to eliminating the root cause, to prevention and to institutional construction while resolutely combating corruption, which is an interpretation of the law against corruption. The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China once again reaffirmed the policy of attaching importance to prevention and emphasized prevention and control of the risk of corruption.

Education should serve as the foundation for prevention.

The building of a system for corruption punishment and prevention with equal emphasis on education, institutions and supervision is the result of a further intensification of the Communist Party of China's understanding of the law regarding the fight against corruption and the upholding of integrity. This experience has been expressed in the improvement of Party conduct and the construction of a clean government since the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. As a fundamental task in combating corruption and building a clean government, education is valued and practiced by the Communist Party of China and serves as a powerful ideological and moral defense line for fighting corruption and guarding against degeneration in contemporary Chinese society.

The institutions are fundamental for combating corruption, so we must develop a number of systematic, complete, scientific, effective, stricter and more close-knit institutional systems to combat corruption. However, even if the institutions are full-fledged, if those who propel institutions forward have no basic institutional awareness and show no respect for the authority of the institutions, the institutions cannot work. Some people may even rack their brains to find institutional loopholes and escape the institutional constraints.

The direct effect of prevention is to effectively combat corruption, but the tenet and value orientation lie in protecting Party members and cadres.

Supervision, risk prevention and control are expressions of care and love and important means for protecting Party members and cadres. A remark made by an old comrade summarizes our effort to strengthen supervision: Our current institutions are prone to arresting the cadres who have fallen into a pit, but can we fill up this pit before they fall into it? It is necessary to build a mechanism for early warning of the risk of corruption and to adopt various means of supervision to fill

up the pits into which Party members and cadres may fall, or at least to post obvious signs and obstacles around these pits. Alerting, even admonishing, Party members and cadres who tend to fall into the pits is the greatest protection and expression of sincere care for them. A slew of institutional mechanisms put forward during the Third Plenary Session of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China focused on prevention; these included scientific and effective mechanisms for restricting and coordinating power—designed to regulate the responsibilities and authority of the Party and the leading governmental cadres at various levels; scientific allocation of the powers and functions of the Party, governmental departments and in-house departments; specification of responsibilities and work tasks; reinforcement and improvement of restrictions and supervision over the exercise of powers by leading cadres; strengthening of the system of administrative supervision and auditing; application of the power list system to local governments at various levels and in their working departments; the publicizing of the process of power operation according to law and the institution of a disclosure system for the Party and governmental affairs as well as for the handling of affairs in various fields—designed to publicize decision making processes, management, services and results; regulations concerning punishment for and prevention of corruption and the control of its risks; the prevention of conflicts of interest; the reporting of personal matters concerning the leading cadres; an avoidance system for taking office; and a pilot system for disclosure of matters concerning newly appointed leading cadres.

Prevention is also reflected in carefully differentiating corrupt and degenerate behaviors and their consequences and errors and mistakes in reform experimentation. Corrupt and degenerate behaviors must be strictly addressed through disciplinary measures from which no escape is allowed. However, errors and mistakes in reform experimentation must be tolerated and forgiven. As China undergoes the intensification of the reform, many new fields must be expanded, and many new directions must be explored. If Party members and cadres are not bold in attempting to make breakthroughs, the reform cannot be intensified. The cadres who dare to reform tend to have a distinctive personality and innovative ideas and are high caliber and courageous; not all of their attempts can become successful. If they are disciplined for occasional errors and mistakes, no cadre will embark on reform and innovation. We must protect these cadres.

Paying more attention to prevention instead of simply combating corruption also marks a shift in the functions and image of our discipline inspection and supervision departments. Party members and cadres are willing to exchange views with the organizational departments, but they are fearful of being required by the discipline inspection department to participate in conversations so that the department can persuade and admonish them to rectify minor misconduct. This fear is closely related to our traditional behavioral pattern. The discipline inspection and supervision departments not only combat and prevent corruption but also severely punish corrupt officials, support Party members and cadres, take precautions, and serve as “health care providers” and health care “sanatoria” to ensure the healthy growth and clean work of Party members and cadres. In modern society, people become accustomed to regular physical medical examinations; therefore, why cannot Party

members and cadres regularly receive “maintenance” from the discipline inspection and supervision departments? Our discipline inspection and supervision departments should dedicate new resources to foster such an atmosphere.

2.3 Be Bold and Skillful at Mobilizing the Masses to Combat Corruption

The convergence of the interests of the masses and those of Party members and cadres determines that supervision from the masses is a well-meaning, benign and constructive joint supervision, which is highly superior to the malicious and destructive alien supervision of multi-party rotating governance. Meanwhile, the masses and Party members and cadres are on different political levels, so this supervision is extraordinarily extensive, profound and inescapable.

The eyes of the masses are discerning. Some government departments deliberately release their public expenses immediately before the end of working hours when leaving for the weekend and post them in inconspicuous positions on their website. These tricks and calculations cannot deceive the masses. The wisdom of the masses is so inexhaustible that they can discover such details even when a department is unwilling to release them or does not release them. When public expenses for a car in a department exceed the normal level, the masses can calculate that the tires are changed once a week. The people joke about it openly: “That car wastes too many shoes.” The strength of the masses is inestimable. It is reported that some departments have developed strict “confidentiality rules” to prevent exposure of their shameful behaviors; however, exposure is unavoidable. The reason is simple: The staff and cadres are fundamentally part of the masses; thus, no under-the-table secrets can be kept.

In particular, in modern society, given the progress in political civilization and scientific and technological development, the scrutiny of the masses regarding corruption is disseminated through news media and the Internet, imposing enormous restrictions on the corrupt behaviors of Party members and cadres.

How can we ensure that the mobilization of the masses does not become a mass movement? The solution is institutional improvement. We should build and improve the system for the protection of democratic supervision so that the masses dare to exercise supervision, and we should develop and improve an implementation system that allows the masses to exercise supervision. In addition, we should develop and improve the accountability system for democratic supervision so that the supervision carried out by the masses works as intended. This series of institutions focuses on the masses, government departments, and Party members and cadres. The establishment and improvement of these institutions will guarantee regulations for supervisors and supervisees to follow and will ensure the regulation-based handling of affairs and normal and effective democratic supervision.

3 Increase the Scientific Level of Party Building

It is necessary to raise the scientific level of Party building. This new requirement was identified for Party building in response to changes in the affairs of the world, the nation and the Party. This requirement brings together the fundamental and the most important points. With respect to how to increase the scientific level of Party building, we generally stress the following views: Scientific theories are applied to guide Party building, scientific institutions are developed to guarantee it, and scientific methods are used to promote it.

These views cover the core issues concerning the increase in the scientific level of Party building; however, in terms of the practice of promoting Party building, we cannot focus on these views and be content with merely repeating them; we must continue to question and think about them. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China vowed to intensify the reform of the system of Party building to improve scientific governance, democratic governance and law-based governance; reinforce the construction of democratic centralism; improve the leadership system of the Party and the manner of governance; and retain the advanced level and purity of the Party to provide a strong political guarantee for reform, opening up and socialist modernization. This requirement pinpoints the source of action for practically increasing the scientific level of Party building.

3.1 The Changed and Unchanged Aspects of the Party: Give Clear Answers Under the Guidance of Scientific Theories

Marxism is the fundamental guiding philosophy for the building of the Communist Party of China. In adopting scientific theories to guide Party building, Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important ideas of the “Three Represents” and the Scientific Outlook on Development should serve as the powerful theoretical guides. This is what the Communist Party of China has said and done. However, it is not easy to combine the guidance of these scientific theories with the new situation and new tasks for the Communist Party of China to realize the innovations to and the development of Party building; a very profound objective law must be known and mastered. A large number of complicated issues must be studied and addressed.

More than 90 years have elapsed since the Communist Party of China was founded. In that period, the Party has experienced revolution, construction and reform, and it has witnessed great changes in the Party’s members, status, environment and tasks. Specifically, the Communist Party of China has transformed from a party that led the people to seize national political power into a party that leads the people to hold national political power and govern the country for a long

time; from a party that led national construction subject to external blockades and under the conditions of a planned economy into a party that leads national construction under the conditions of opening up and developing a social market economy. Now that changes have taken place in the functional orientation of the political party, in its goals and tasks as well as in the governance environment, what are the changes in the political party? What the Party should look like is the fundamental issue for the building of the Communist Party of China and the primary issue that must be addressed in adopting scientific theories to guide Party building.

Changes contain connotations at two levels. On the first level, changes are inevitable, and it is impossible to prevent them; on the second level, changes are essential and existence is impossible without them. However, in regard to the object of a particular connotation or definitive property, for example, in a political party, something must remain unchanged and relatively stable amidst the changes during a particular historical period—the law that governs constant changes is unchanged, and the definitive property in changes at a particular stage is unchanged. What is the definitive property of the Communist Party of China, which has governed and will govern the country for a long time? What is changeable? What cannot be changed? What must be changed? What is absolutely unchanged? These questions must be explicitly answered under the guidance of scientific theories.

Over the 37 years of reform and opening up, some behavioral patterns and governance philosophies of the Communist Party of China have changed; however, we must clearly understand those changes. Did they involve change like that of a child into an adult or that of one person into another person? These two types of change are essentially different. The change from a child into an adult is not problematic, but the change from one person into another person is problematic. Let us clarify this concept: If a political party, for example, is changed from Party A into Party B through reform, we can imagine that Party A eventually disappears.

There is a debate in philosophy called the Sorites Paradox (or the Paradox of the Heap)—we assume that a quantity of millet seeds forms a heap, so the following philosophical question is raised: Does the heap remain a heap if one seed is removed from it? There is no doubt about the answer: It remains a heap. As another seed is removed, and then more and more seeds, etc., the heap dwindles, but it is still called a heap, or at least the heap still exists. When only one millet seed is left, another philosophical question is raised: After the only remaining seed is removed, does the heap still exist? There is no doubt about the answer: The heap has disappeared. Then, we face the following philosophical question: In both cases, one seed has been removed, so why does such a great change occur after the last millet seed has been taken away? Is the last seed different from the others?

When we stress that we should be consciously freed from inopportune mind-sets, practices and institutions, from the erroneous and dogmatic understanding of Marxism, and from the shackles of subjectivism and metaphysics, we must understand what the inopportune mind-sets, practices and institutions are, what the erroneous and dogmatic understanding of Marxism is, and what the shackles of subjectivism and metaphysics are. If no clear delimitation and unified

understanding exist, everyone and every group may stuff what they dislike, what they are unwilling to tolerate and what they do not accept into a basket and abandon it.

For the Communist Party of China, there is unity between writing a new theoretical chapter and upholding the basic principle of Marxism, and acquiring fresh experience does not conflict with carrying forward the historical tradition. The new historical orientation means that the Communist Party of China must become the vanguard of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. This does not mean that the vanguard nature of China's working class is downplayed; the class nature of the Marxist political party cannot be discarded, or the fundamentals would be lost. The new developmental mode means that the Communist Party of China must lead the people to develop a socialist market economy, but this does not mean that the market principle replaces the principle of the Party character and that the political party has its own special interests. The primary tenet of the Communist Party of China—wholeheartedly serving the people—cannot be abandoned; otherwise, the Party would be ruined.

Therefore, when we stress the spirit of the reform to promote Party building, the things that were effective in the past and are feasible in a closed construction environment—including the tenet and faith of the Communist Party of China, the mind-set of Party members, the principles under which the Party attaches importance to building the ideology of the Party and basing Party building on the Party's political line, the Party's principle of democratic centralism, and the Party's fine traditions and styles dominated by three major styles—are still of great significance, although their forms of realization may be new.

3.2 Substance and Procedure: Building Scientific Institutions—“Two Wings of a Bird”, “Two Wheels of a Vehicle”

In modern society, the institutional guarantee is absolutely fundamental for ensuring that a political party, as an organization, operates soundly and has a high combat effectiveness. If there are no institutions, there will be no rules or standardization. If the institutions are sound, they can vigorously promote and guarantee Party building; if the institutions are unsound or defective, Party building will be greatly affected. Deng Xiaoping repeatedly stressed: “The leadership and organizational systems are fundamental, long-term and have a vital bearing on the overall situation and stability.”⁶ Upgrading some feasible practices to institutions has been an important experience of Party building over the years.

However, institutional construction cannot be empty talk and practically unfeasible though theoretically feasible; we should eliminate the cases in which the

⁶*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 336.

institutions are nominally functional but do not work in practice. Scientific institutions are those that reflect the law and the operative institutions. This is why the Communist Party of China stresses that it is necessary to enhance the rigorousness and scientificity of existence within the Party and Party building.

What are scientific institutions? Which institutions can be regarded as rigorous and scientific? The theory of institutional research tells us that scientific institutions make up an institutional system; institutional design cannot be separately conducted and must be carried out in a coordinated way to form a system. The institutional system should contain substantive and procedural institutions and should specify the ways of handling violations of regulations to reduce the discretionary space in institutional execution.

Specifically, substantive institutions refer mainly to the institutional arrangements that embody value orientation and seek just and legitimate results. The political party must respect the status of Party members as the main body, so the institutions for guaranteeing the democratic rights of Party members, including substantive institutional arrangements such as the congress systems and democratic centralism, are necessary. Procedural institutions refer to the procedural regulations and requirements for realizing the value philosophy required by the substantive institutions; they focus on the openness, legitimacy and standardization of the process of realizing an institution. For example, the democratic rights of Party members are guaranteed by the systems of the Party's congress as procedural institutions, including the tenure system of the Party's congress and the Party's representative permanent tenure system; the full reflection of Party members' opinions by democratic centralism is guaranteed by the procedural institutions such as the voting system. The procedural institutions effectively regulate the discretionary space for the implementation of institutions, thus guaranteeing the necessary flexibility and seriousness of the institutions.

Theoretically, we must properly handle the dialectical relationship between the two during the construction of institutions. If attention is paid only to the substantive institutions and no procedural institutions are available to provide a guarantee, then in fact, only the value declared by the substantive institutions may be kept in the discourse, and the sincerity of the discourse may be questioned in the end. In the present day, the masses believe that many institutions sound good but are false, which means that the substantive institutions will be reduced to the glory-seeking ones because there are no procedural institutions to guarantee them. In contrast, if we excessively emphasize the procedural institutions and focus only on the form, we will be trapped in another misunderstanding—the institutions are gaudy and seem to be well established, but they cannot really work, and in the end, institutional justice will be damaged.

Given the reality and experience of the institutional construction in Chinese society and the Communist Party of China over the years, we should pay more attention to the procedural institutions. In the past, we carried out much work on the substantive institutions and developed many institutions regarding “what to do” and “what ought to be” but paid less attention to the procedural institutions regarding “how to do” and “what to do”. Deng Xiaoping said: “The mistakes made by us in

the past were indeed related to the thoughts and styles of some leaders, but more importantly, they were associated with the organizational system and the system of work. If these systems are good, they can ensure that bad people will not run amuck; otherwise, they will make good people fail to fully do good things, even becoming bad people.”⁷ This remark points to the procedural institutions.

For the Communist Party of China, handling affairs according to statutory procedure is an important part of Party self-building and an important guarantee for law-based governance by the political party. As the Constitution and laws are adopted to regulate the governing behavior of the Communist Party of China, they should regulate what to do and how to do it as well as the governing procedure to be followed by the governing body, and the governance supervision procedure should also be improved to let the masses know how to supervise the political party and the government. Practice shows that the result of attaching importance to developing the procedural institutions and handling affairs according to the statutory procedure is greatly different from the result of failing to do so. If no procedural institutions are available for procedurally regulating the political party and the government in terms of “how to do”, there would be no way to regulate the political party and the government in terms of “what to do”. If no procedural institutions are available for regulating the procedure and the channel for the masses to supervise the political party and the government, the masses will have no idea how to supervise them; in fact, the masses will not be able to exercise such supervision.

3.3 Information Network Technology: The Scientific Methods that Reflect the Characteristics of the Times Add Luster to Party Building

As the times and the environment are constantly changing, laws should evolve accordingly. The methods that were feasible in the past will become useless as the situation changes. This also applies to Party building—the age of change and the practice of innovations must be dealt with through reform and new methods.

In the past, there was a pyramid structure for obtaining and mastering information, with the decision makers at higher levels gaining access to information more opportunely and efficiently and then transferring it through the pyramid structure from the higher to the lower levels. There was less communication among different areas, among different social groups and among groups with the same interest appeals in different areas; society was not fully active. Given that mere access to information determined the quality of decision making, under normal circumstances, the decisions made by a governor were indeed better than those made by other groups. It was relatively easy for the governor to develop universally applicable policies; even if there were different opinions, or even objections, from

⁷*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, p. 333.

one or two area(s) or group(s), those opinions and/or objections could not be disseminated or affect the general situation and existing policies because there was no effective means of communicating them. Even if an emergency occurred, it was relatively easy to block the passage of a message, control its impact within a possibly very small range and then take time to find solutions.

However, in the information age, this governance mode and philosophy hardly work. With the development of information resources, especially the advancement of network technology, the entire planet has become a global village. In the network, space disappears completely; boundaries no longer exist; and status, identity and hierarchy no longer have any practical significance; top decision makers and the ordinary people, wherever they are, can obtain barrier-free access to the same platform. Information can be conveniently obtained and quickly spread. Such technical openness directly results in an open society, so openness and transparency have increasingly become the main features of a society defined by the age of information and the most basic requirements of government. Any governor must quickly make decisions openly and transparently, and his or her results are directly subject to evaluation and testing by the general public. At present, the information on which any social policy decision made by the government is based is almost the same as the information that is accessible to the general public; even the information obtained by the governor is not more timely, comprehensive, objective and effective than that accessible to the general public due to institutional friction and organizational delay.

Instantly and seamlessly communicating the philosophies and policies of the governing political party to every member, collecting the useful suggestions and true requirements of every member on an unfiltered and unabated basis, and ensuring that the political party can vigorously and flexibly cope with challenges are unimaginable without modern network technology.

More importantly, in the age of information, legal resources are increasingly important and have even become more important than power resources in governing. Consolidating the jurisprudential basis for our governance, fully relying on laws and utilizing laws to build a harmonious socialist society is a priority for enhancing the Party's governing capacity. In the age of information, information is extensively communicated, widespread social groups come into being, various unprecedented relationships develop, and social activities are briskly conducted. Various conflicts and problems are destined to occur among different social strata and interest groups due to their different types of group consciousnesses and different manners of obtaining and maintaining their interests. As the social interests become increasingly diverse, the governing party cannot merely use its administrative power to "order" and may be required to engage more in coordination and consultation from the legal perspective. The Party's governing capacity is manifested not only in rigid control and top-down instructions but also in dynamic social harmony, conscious and voluntary recognition by the masses, conscious maintenance of the laws and conscious practice of the rule of law by the masses. This requires us to make new progress in carrying out the strategy of governing the country under the rule of law. The Party should govern the country under the rule of

law, lead the legislative efforts, take the lead in abiding by the laws, guarantee law enforcement, carry out activities within the scope of the Constitution and laws, and play the leading role in upholding the authority of those laws. The Party should urge and support the state organs to exercise their functions and powers according to laws, ensure that the state organs do so, and promote the work on various fronts under the rule of law. The Party should correctly understand, choose and coordinate various aspects of interest relations through laws and establish and improve a mechanism for the coordination of social interests to guide the masses to express their interest requirements and solve conflicts of interest in a rational and lawful way. Moreover, the Party should be skillful, by the operation of the laws, at protecting the legitimate interests, inhibiting the unlawful interests and realizing an integration of interests to identify and serve the best interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and to safeguard the fundamental interests of the masses.

If we continue to adopt the previous philosophy and mode, and if we are content with the pre-existing ways and methods, it will be impossible to better govern the country, and severe problems may occur. The mass emergencies in recent years have been profound lessons for the Party with respect to governance in the age of information.

We should not believe that Marxism is quite detached from the network or that the network is not Marxist. In fact, Marxism is based on modern scientific and technological progress. According to Friedrich Engels, every new discovery in scientific and technological development gratified Karl Marx. Therefore, as Marxists, the members of the Communist Party of China should not reject the network, the most important scientific and technological invention in the contemporary world. Its members should dare to learn about new information technologies and be adept at applying them to strengthen and improve Party building, enhance the efficiency of Party building, and make information technology a weapon to be used by the Party in governing the country rather than a weapon for its opponents. Specifically, we should run better websites related to Party building, build a national information database for Party members, promote the development of information within the grassroots Party organizations, strengthen the integrated construction of the modern network for distance education of Party members and cadres in rural areas, improve online reporting, use technology to handle the mechanism for combating corruption, and build a clean government and a mechanism for online information collection and processing. In fact, these new methods have played an active role in Party building.

On December 1, 2009, the mobile phone newspaper “Studying and Practicing the Scientific Outlook on Development” was jointly launched on special websites involving the central activities for studying and practicing the Scientific Outlook on Development—Study & Practice Online and in Xinhuanet’s *Xinhua Mobile Phone Newspaper*—to directly convey the latest information, requirements and progress in the educational and practical activities of Party members and cadres at the grassroots level and readers nationwide, setting a precedent in utilizing mobile phone media to carry out major themed publicity and educational activities. Such a mobile phone newspaper is regarded as a “portable mobile Party lesson”, through which

learning the typical cases features two-way rather than one-way communication; this effort has been well received by Party members and cadres at the grassroots level.

On January 5, 2010, General Secretary Xi Jinping sent a short message of greeting to one million secretaries of grassroots Party organizations and college-graduate village officials nationwide, marking the launch of the national mobile phone information system for Party building at the grassroots level. This system collects the mobile phone numbers of one million secretaries and college-graduate village officials and heads of organizational departments under the Party committees at the provincial, municipal and county levels nationwide. Short message interaction via mobile phones enables quick, timely, two-way and secure contact and communication among the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; the organizational departments under Party committees at the provincial, regional and municipal levels; secretaries of the grassroots Party organizations; and college-graduate village officials.

Of course, such efforts are just the start of strengthening Party building through scientific methods. With the deepening of our understanding and the improvement of our capacity, these methods, which adapt to the characteristics of the times, will certainly become the new tools for the Communist Party of China to reinforce its Party building against the new historical background, and they will add luster to it.

4 Consolidate the Foundation and Cultivate Vitality with Faith

What is relied upon to pull together more than 80 million Party members? Faith. What is relied upon to make a single spark of the Chinese revolution start a prairie fire and help win the Chinese revolution with Marxism in the ravines? Faith. In its more than 90 years of history, the Communist Party of China has always adhered to its faith in Marxism, whether enduring great hardships in pioneering work or advancing triumphantly. Once faith is strong, prosperity will come; once faith becomes weak, difficulties will excessively strain the ability to go on.

4.1 The Communist Party of China Is a Political Party with Faith

The Communist Party of China attaches great importance to the Party's faith, thanks to a deep understanding of the Party's nature and a high consciousness of its role as the vanguard of the working class. This fact is exactly proved by the more than 90 years of the history of the Communist Party of China.

Faith is fundamental for differentiating one political party from other political parties. What a political party looks like originates from its faith.

Faith can be neither vague nor hypocritical. If its substance is abandoned, though its name is retained, petty profits may temporarily be realized, but the building of a political party will finally collapse. This lesson has been paid for in blood by other political parties around the world.

Some may argue that faith seems unimportant for a political party in modern society. For example, between the two parties in the United States, the policy differences are increasingly small, let alone the differences in philosophy. The members of both parties need not be registered until the election. Citizens are free to register as a member of either party. A current member of the Republican Party might even join the Democratic Party four years later.

This view is correct, but it reveals only the phenomenon and not its essence. Modern Western political parties came into being and developed in the general environment of a capitalist society, and all of those political parties recognize the capitalist society. The differences among the political parties are only subtle ones in the specific steps towards better preserving the development of the capitalist society. In a modern capitalist society, especially in some developed countries, the class structure is relatively unified and the votes are relatively concentrated in the middle class, so the policies of all political parties, whether under the two-party system or the multi-party system, remain close to the middle.

However, it is erroneous to believe that members of these political parties have no faith. They have faith in capitalism. Their faith is either firm or unassailable. They not only believe in capitalism but also require others to believe in it. Some Western countries even label their values “universal values” in the hope of spreading their faith. In this regard, many aspects of the political parties in capitalist societies are worth our study.

As the vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party of China strives to achieve the goal of eliminating the old exploitative society, building a socialist society and realizing a communist society, so it is necessary to establish the communist faith under the guidance of Marxism. This faith cannot be considered absolutely incompatible with faith in a capitalist society—because both socialism and communism develop by judiciously drawing upon capitalism and never avoid the absorption of the beneficial elements of capitalism; however, new fundamental regulations, requirements and contents of socialism must be available, and it must be clear that faith in socialism is totally different from faith in capitalism.

Faith is clear-cut and does not need to be held obscurely. Faith wins respect through sincerity and is achieved by becoming strong. Attempts to sway others and curry favor with “hypocrisy” because of the fear that others do not recognize our faith will backfire and result in our opponents losing respect for us. The Communist Party of China’s faith in communism and its unremitting pursuit of communism distinguish it. Can the Party retain its character without faith in communism? Is it necessary for the Communist Party of China to persist without the pursuit of communism? These questions seem frightening, but they reveal the truth.

Faith is fundamental to a political party, so the Communist Party of China attaches great importance to it. Maoism, like a flag, stresses faith. Only when a flag is flown can a large number of followers band together behind it. Deng Xiaoping emphasized that the success achieved amidst severe hardships and a mountain of difficulties by the Chinese revolution in the past was attributable to our ideals, faith in Marxism and communism; thus, faith in Marxism was a spiritual motivational force for achieving victory in the Chinese revolution.⁸

The members of the Communist Party of China have earnestly practiced faith. Mao Zedong said: “I never wavered in my faith in Marxism after I accepted it.” This is proved by his lifelong dedication. Not only Mao Zedong but also all of his family members were devoted to this cause. All seven of Mao Zedong’s family members dedicated their lives to their faith. China’s independence, the emancipation of the Chinese people, the socialist construction and the realization of communism—Marxism-based faith—are the goals that Mao Zedong relentlessly pursued and that embody the value of his whole life. He gave up everything for this faith. Therefore, he risked his life traveling to Chongqing to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek and staying in the northern Shaanxi Province to pin down his opponent, gain the upper hand and master the overall situation.

Once you understand this faith of Mao Zedong’s, you understand why he could wholeheartedly serve the people and sincerely shout: “Long live the people”; why he hated and even repulsed members of the Communist Party of China who had become corrupt and enjoyed privileges; and why he opposed bureaucratism and formalism even to the extent of forsaking the usual order of administrative management and leadership, causing the disastrous Cultural Revolution.

The leaders of the Communist Party of China have seriously practiced faith, and so have the ordinary Party members.

4.2 The Communist Party of China’s Faith Is a Scientific One

In the past, faith in communism was considered a raging flood or a savage beast in Western society; people in Western society even adopted violent means to crack down on that faith. In modern society, such bloody acts have seemingly vanished, but actions to contain, guard against, dispel and smear communism have never ended. Why? It is not merely because faith in communism is opposed to their faith but, more importantly, because faith in communism demonstrates the ability to realize its pursuit and is therefore like a spiritual atomic bomb. The faiths of some aboriginal tribes are displayed in museums in Western society in the name of “diversity” because they pose no threat to Western capitalism. This ability to have faith in communism comes from its scientificity.

⁸Deng (1993).

Communism is never entirely imaginary. It represents the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in real economic and political life. The overwhelming majority can be the proletariat, the working class or the middle class, and they may be described in different ways with the changing times, but they must be the overwhelming majority in society.

So far, all developmental modes in human society have been “non-neutral”, and every developmental mode has favored a particular group and disfavored others.

The current developmental mode in Western capitalism favors small groups and takes advantage of capital, patents, even the control of rules to provide a guarantee for some groups to do whatever they want. Even “democracy”, a sacred idea in Western ideology, does not shy away from the game of the elites—if the ordinary people inadvertently become involved in this game, they will be labeled a mob by the majority. In such a circumstance, the majority of the groups are marginalized. Even if some groups are included in globalization, they are nothing but cheap labor who serve as tools, and they are gradually made less similar.

Some may argue that all of the people in the developed capitalist countries have become rich; this view is correct. The internationalization of domestic contradictions is the current developmental trend in capitalist society. In the United States, 300 million people indeed live a good life by leveraging the advantage of the US dollar as the international currency to shift the financial crisis to other countries and make the rest of the world pay the price of the subprime crisis. If capitalist development can ensure that 6 billion people around the world live as good a life as the Americans, faith in communism is not opposed to faith in capitalism; however, this achievement is impossible within the logical framework of the capitalist system.

Communism does not turn all of the people into proletarians, but it creates a good social developmental environment and good conditions to make it possible for everyone to achieve all-around development, and it aims to eliminate both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to achieve the overall liberation of the proletariat. This is why Friedrich Engels stressed that the most fundamental characteristic of communist society is that each individual’s free development was the precondition for the free development of all the people. The development of human society should focus on more than 6 billion people rather than on only 300 million people. For the Communist Party of China, the development of Chinese society always includes the entire population of 1.3 billion and 9.60 million square kilometers instead of only some people and some regions.

This faith of the members of the Communist Party of China and the ideals and convictions derived from this faith do not come from the moral resentment of capitalism and the good intention of moving towards communism but are based on the scientific understanding of the law of social development. Social production in a capitalist society is not designed to meet needs but comes from the pursuit of profits. In a capitalist society, labor serves as the tool for capital to obtain surplus value rather than as the main body in the social production. Such a developmental mode is unsustainable and deviates from fairness and justice, so it has no future.

Only when everyone's right to development is respected and everyone is able to develop can society really witness prosperity and development.

In the modern world, the socialist society has just made breakthroughs and the communist society has not yet become a reality, while the capitalist developmental mode has many bases for existence, is widely supported, and tends to sweep up and dominate everything and everyone. However, the fact that ideals have not yet become reality does not amount to utopia, and in the same way, real existence is not necessarily rational. Although the communist society has not yet emerged, this does not mean that the communist movement is not under way. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels said that communism, for them, was not the condition that should be established and the ideal to which reality should adapt; what they called communism was a realistic movement that eliminated the pre-existing conditions; thus, the conditions for this movement came from the preconditions.⁹ The members of the Communist Party of China have always aimed to surpass the capitalist society and build the socialist society. Blazing the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is our communist movement in the current time.

As long as we make constant efforts to change the old social state, communism is incorporated into our daily actions.

4.3 Practicing Faith Is the Source of Strength for the Communist Party of China

Needless to say, as the time that the Communist Party of China governs the country as the only governing party is extended, the awareness of the political party's faith will gradually wane. Some people believe that as long as the Party has power in hand, it can accomplish anything, control all resources and overcome all forces. In fact, this view is wrong and does not even sound reasonable. The Communist Party of China cannot win the governing power if it has no strength from faith; it cannot be granted the status of the only governing party by China's Constitution if there is no faith. This causal relationship cannot be reversed.

Therefore, the leadership of the Communist Party of China is reflected in its tenet, faith and theories and is not exercised merely over its members. The Communist Party of China realizes its pursuits through the members who have faith in it and does not allow its members to drape themselves in the flag to impress people in order to pursue their own interests in its name.

In the face of reality, now that the Communist Party of China has advanced for more than 90 years, the requirement to practice faith has once again become prominent.

Arduous tasks and a long road for practicing that faith lie ahead.

⁹Marx and Engels (1995).

Against the current background of the times and the international environment, it is not easy to uphold faith in communism. The inner vitality of capitalism continues to be released; the international communist movement is declining; and the law that governs the development of human society is not visible, as we thought in the past, but is hidden in the social phenomena that are displaying prosperity. To lay bare the crises and the inevitability of demise behind the surface prosperity of capitalist society and gain an insight into the inevitable triumph and ironclad rule amidst the current decline of the communist movement, great consciousness, strategic focus and dauntlessness are required; otherwise, it is easy to follow the herd and even become disappointed, discouraged and self-destructive.

The need to practice faith brooks no delay.

As the Communist Party of China is the governing party, some Party members have not yet dared to publicly deny their faith in communism, but they no longer believe in communism in their hearts and actions. This circumstance is very dangerous for a political party. Public opposition to communism and criticism of the Communist Party of China do not matter. The Communist Party of China has always faced opposition and never fears it. The existence of opponents makes us more vigilant and motivated and urges us to strengthen our self-discipline. What we are afraid of is those who hoist a banner, like a tiger skin, to intimidate others; sail under false colors; and commit non-communist, or even anti-communist, acts under the banner of communism.

According to Mao Zedong's experience in his later years, if a politician has a strong faith but makes mistakes, that politician is not good for society; however, the high-ranking politicians without faith are even worse. A politician with faith is absolutely trustworthy, though he or she may make mistakes, in which case, as long as the standardized political system and political operational mechanism are in place, his or her mistakes are avoidable; the modern political development has provided us with such a condition. However, if a politician has no basic faith and makes indiscreet remarks or acts irresponsibly in society while focusing on his or her own interests, a tragedy may occur. Deng Xiaoping stressed: "As the Party and the government carry out policies of economic reform and opening up, the Party members, especially the high-ranking Party cadres, should attach great importance to them and earnestly practice the communist ideal and communist morality; otherwise, we will be spiritually disarmed; we will be unable to educate our young people and lead the country and the people towards socialist construction."¹⁰

Practicing faith starts with us. The Party's faith is a grand theme and a very specific object. The vitality of the Party's faith does not exist in classical works, documents and reports but is reflected in the actions of every member. Practicing faith is not a slogan but represents the consciousness of every member. We should not only organizationally join the Party but also move towards communism in our thoughts. For the real members of the Party, in practicing faith, it is not necessary to compare themselves with each other. The following plausible but absurd question

¹⁰Deng (1994b), p. 367

should not be asked: Why should I practice faith while others do not practice it? We have faith, so we practice it; this is enough. A single spark can start a prairie fire, and the real faith can awaken the people. When every member of the Party practices it, our faith will bear fruit.

The splendid history of more than 90 years makes us realize that we are the people with consciousness who are armed with faith in communism and in Marxist theory. We understand our thoughts and recognize our faith, so we practice our “-ism”. China’s current path, which impresses the entire international community, is the masterpiece created by Party members while practicing their faith and pursuing their “-ism” in the new era.

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Chapter 6

Strategic Confidence: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Is a Great Chapter

Developing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a great, unprecedented practice and a gigantic systematic project. Such a practice and project entail concerted efforts from various forces and rely on the combined action of various elements. In this regard, the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is the way to realize the values and addresses the direction of Chinese society. The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a guide to action, world outlook and methodology; it addresses facts regarding Chinese society and issues concerning how to develop that society. The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a fundamental guarantee, action charter and code of conduct, it addresses the shift from “what the system should look like” to “the actual state” and aims to guarantee the shift from philosophy to practice and from theory to action. These three aspects are unified in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics and are its most distinctive characteristics.

The developmental course of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics over several decades shows that our confidence in our path, theories and institutions is, in the final analysis, our confidence in socialism with Chinese characteristics.

1 Confidence in Our Path

The brilliant achievements of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in Chinese society over more than 30 years occurred not through chance or by luck but under the guidance of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics. The road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is defined as follows: Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, based on the basic national conditions and with economic construction as the central task, the four cardinal principles are upheld; reform and opening up are carried out; and the productive social forces are emancipated and developed to build a socialist market economy, socialist democratic politics, an advanced socialist culture, a harmonious socialist

society and a socialist ecological civilization, promoting the all-around development of the people to gradually realize common prosperity for all and to build a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country.

1.1 Fundamental Direction for the Development and Progress of Contemporary China

Since Deng Xiaoping vowed in his opening speech at the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1982 that China would take its own road to build socialism with Chinese characteristics, socialism with Chinese characteristics has become the theme at the national congresses of the Communist Party of China. This theme can be identified in the titles of the reports of the national congresses of the Communist Party of China:

The 13th National Congress: Forge ahead along the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics;

The 14th National Congress: Accelerate reform, opening up and modernization to win a greater victory in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics;

The 15th National Congress: Hold high the great banner of the Deng Xiaoping Theory and build the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics towards the 21st century in an all-around way;

The 16th National Congress: Build a well-off society in an all-around way and open a new chapter in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics;

The 17th National Congress: Hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and strive to win a new victory in building a well-off society in an all-around way; and

The 18th National Congress: Unswervingly advance along the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics to build a well-off society in an all-around way.

The members of the Communist Party of China always hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics to steadfastly take that road because it has a vital bearing on the Party's lifeline, the country's future, the nation's destiny and the people's happiness. This is the road taken by members of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people.

On the one hand, the Communist Party of China is a Marxist political party, and a Marxist political party naturally adopts Marxism as its guiding thought. Marxism's positions, views, methods, ideals, faith, tenet, basic principles, basic judgments and basic conceptions certainly serve as the norms of action for the Communist Party of China. If deviation from these norms occurred, the Communist Party of China would not exist. Socialism with Chinese characteristics—the result of upholding the basic principles of scientific socialism—is the best and the most powerful evidence that the members of the Communist Party of China adhere to Marxism.

On the other hand, socialism with Chinese characteristics is impressively marked with Chinese elements and deeply rooted in China's soil. China's national conditions are neither empty talk nor a pretext. Karl Marx said the people create their own history, but not at will and not under conditions chosen by them; such creation occurs under the directly available, existing and inherited conditions.¹ It is impossible for us to keep these factors and the existing state from the people. The national conditions are part of these factors. History, culture, economic conditions and the level of development of a country are not selectable; instead, they are fixed and specific. For example, in China, the huge population, weak foundation and underdevelopment of the productive forces are national conditions that have lasted for many years and will continue for more years; safeguarding national security, national unity and the people's interests is a long-term task and priority. As mentioned in the report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the basic condition that China will remain in the primary stage of socialism for a long time to come has not changed, the principal contradiction in Chinese society—between the increasing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwards social production—remains unchanged, and the international status of China as the largest developing country in the world has not changed. China's future development and construction must proceed against this objective background and in this environment.

1.2 Basic Requirements of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Building and developing socialism is the historical mission that should be shouldered by members of the Communist Party of China, and it is also the Party members' responsibility towards the Chinese people. Since the Communist Party of China governs the country, it has concentrated all its work on building and developing socialism. However, what is socialism? How can socialism be built? The members of the Communist Party of China have performed long-term investigations and practice to answer these questions.

Without complete theoretical descriptions and the existing blueprint, the first-generation members of the Communist Party of China, represented by Mao Zedong, carried out socialist construction by relying on a "forefather"—fragmented socialism-related remarks made by Marxist classic writers—and an "elder brother"—as the only actual socialist country, the Soviet Union naturally became the model for China. After New China was founded, we put forward a number of policies and principles concerning the building of socialism to quickly restore the national economy, conduct the socialist transformation and successfully establish the socialist system. However, as mentioned by comrade Mao Zedong in a meeting

¹Marx and Engels (1995a).

in 1962, we were still blind regarding socialist construction. Given the historical stage and the tortuousness of experimentation, the purity of the institutional form was excessively emphasized; as a result, policies went beyond the primary stage of socialism and led to huge losses.

The central collective leadership of the second generation, with comrade Deng Xiaoping at its core, focused on the fundamental issue—what socialism is and how to build it—and profoundly revealed the essence of socialism by emancipating and developing the productive forces, eliminating exploitation and polarization to ultimately achieve common prosperity, and elevating the understanding of socialism to a new scientific level. Under this guidance, we took economic construction as the central task, vigorously developed the productive social forces, carried out the reform and opening up, and established the socialist market economic system. After more than 20 years of reform and development, the comprehensive national strength of the socialist country has been greatly improved.

The central collective leadership of the third-generation Party, with comrade Jiang Zemin at its core and comrade Hu Jintao as General Secretary since the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, successfully upheld and developed socialism with Chinese characteristics at new historical starting points.

Although we have continuously deepened the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, its connotations and basic requirements are still constantly enriched and developed. We still participate in philosophical analyses and discussions regarding relative truth and absolute truth and the understanding of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We can develop a periodic understanding of some principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and at a given time, these principles may be completely applicable and a matter of course in the corresponding scenarios of social development. However, with social development and a change of circumstances, some principles that were once considered essential and extremely important may become increasingly non-essential and insignificant. Moreover, some aspects of which we were not aware or that were considered unnecessary may become increasingly important and urgent.

For example, we did not consider harmony at the early stage of socialist construction with Chinese characteristics. However, with economic and social development, the change in the social structure and the development of thinking and mind-sets, social harmony has become increasingly important for the development of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China set the task of building a harmonious socialist society so that the overall layout of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics developed explicitly from a three-in-one socialist construction—socialist economic construction, political construction and cultural construction—into a four-in-one socialist construction—socialist economic construction, political construction, cultural construction and social construction, and the connotations of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics were expanded. The Sixth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China further issued a major judgment that “social harmony is the essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics” and vowed to build

a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country—“harmonious” was added after being identified as a goal of socialism with Chinese characteristics that was similar to “strong, prosperous, democratic and culturally advanced”—thus making new progress and reaching a new level in understanding socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Therefore, what should be written on the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics? What road map should be developed for the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics? The members of the Communist Party of China can be completely relied upon and fully expected to create such content and develop this road map according to the basic principles of Marxism and China’s national conditions in response to the people’s will and the requirements of the times. In this regard, the contemporary members of the Communist Party of China can accomplish much rather than doing nothing.

The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China identified eight basic requirements for socialism with Chinese characteristics—upholding the status of the people as the main body, emancipating and developing the productive social forces, promoting the reform and opening up, safeguarding social fairness and justice, taking the road to common prosperity, enhancing social harmony, stressing peaceful development and upholding the Party’s leadership. These eight basic requirements must be developed according to the Party’s basic theories—its basic line, basic program, basic experience and profound summarization of its practice over the more than 60 years of China’s socialist construction, especially the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. These requirements are essential and reflect the law of the Party’s governance of the country, the law of socialist construction and the law that governs the development of human society. They show that the Party’s understanding of the law that governs socialism with Chinese characteristics has reached a new level.

1.3 The Five-in-One Overall Layout of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The expansion of the overall layout of socialism with Chinese characteristics also embodies the deepening of the Party’s understanding of the law that governs the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Before the 16th National Congress of the Party, the understanding of the overall framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics focused on economic, political and cultural construction based on the belief that socialism with Chinese characteristics would be well built as long as such construction was well executed.

With the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we increasingly realized that the achievements of such a construction were not used to enhance beauty and should be conducive to continuously meeting the material, cultural and vital needs of the people, constantly raising their living standard and quality of life. This task was nothing but social construction. Therefore, the 17th National Congress

of the Party added social construction with a focus on the people's livelihood, thus changing the three-in-one socialist construction to a four-in-one version.

The 18th National Congress of the Party expanded the four-in-one socialist construction to a five-in-one version by adding the construction of the ecological civilization. Why is this expansion of the overall layout crucial? Tremendous achievements were made in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics over the years, but more and more challenges and problems that had to be addressed in future development also occurred along with these achievements. The economy has developed, but environmental and resource bottlenecks are on the increase. How can China become ecologically sound—retain a blue sky, green land and clean water, as mentioned in the report to the 18th National Congress of the Party—along with its economic, political, cultural and social development and be transformed from a strong and powerful country into a beautiful country? This transformation relies upon the construction of the ecological civilization. The construction of the ecological civilization means that an ecological mind-set of must be adopted regarding various aspects of the process of the economic, political, cultural and social construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and must be reflected in the manner and lifestyle of production to achieve green, low-carbon and cyclic development. Consequently, the overall layout of socialism with Chinese characteristics becomes more substantial and three-dimensional and more favorable for addressing the ecological risks of future development.

In fact, the construction of an ecological civilization has greater meaning. At a deeper level, it reflects the experimentation and self-conscious practice of a new form of civilization. This indicates that the development of both Chinese society and socialism with Chinese characteristics not only occurs in the economic, political, cultural and social fields but is also the development of a new form of civilization. Thus, Chinese society contributes the road to socialism with Chinese characteristics and a new form of civilization—an ecological civilization—to the world. This new civilization results from combining China's splendid 5000-year-old civilization with the achievements of the modern, industrial civilization and carrying out creative transformations.

1.4 The Times-Specific Self-consciousness of China's Road

China's road is a new road carved out by the Communist Party of China through a combination of the basic principles of Marxism with China's reality and the characteristics of the times. The road to socialism with Chinese characteristics is the epitome of China's road in the contemporary era. With a deeply historical origin and an extensive realistic foundation, this road is a profound necessity of the times and has a broad developmental prospect. This is because it is also the road towards self-improvement, a win-win outcome and innovation as taken by comprehensively examining the general developmental trend of the present-day world and contemporary China; fully understanding the new requirements for China's development

and the people's new expectations; and deepening, from a new perspective, the law of the Party's governance of the country, the socialist law of construction and the law of the development of human society.

1.4.1 The road towards self-improvement: a clear understanding of the historical orientation

Karl Marx said that the people created their own history, but not at will and not under conditions chosen by them; such a creation occurs under the directly available, existing and inherited conditions.² The national conditions are part of these conditions. History, culture, the economic condition and the developmental level of a country are not selectable but are fixed and specific.

According to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the basic condition for China to remain in the primary stage of socialism for a long time has not changed, and the main contradiction in the society—between the increasing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwards social production—remains unchanged; moreover, the international status of China as the largest developing country in the world has not changed, either. Therefore, under any circumstance, we should bear in mind the most prominent national condition—the primary stage of socialism—and the forward movement of reform and development in any aspect should be based on the greatest reality—the primary stage of socialism—rather than subjective desires and foreign models.

China's road is described as follows: with economic construction as the central task, the four cardinal principles are upheld; reform and opening up are carried out; and the productive social forces are emancipated and developed to build a socialist market economy, socialist democratic politics, an advanced socialist culture, a harmonious socialist society and a socialist ecological civilization. A clear understanding of the history of Chinese society shows careful compliance with the most prominent national condition.

As the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics has been pursued, the productive forces have been greatly improved, and major progress has been made in various undertakings in China. However, the conditions, including a huge population, a weak foundation, unbalanced regional development and underdevelopment of the productive forces, have generally not yet been fundamentally changed, and concentrating on developing the productive social forces remains the first priority for Chinese society. Therefore, China's road gives prominence to developing a socialist market economy; upholding the basic economic system in which public ownership remains dominant while diverse forms of ownership develop side by side; removing the fetters imposed on the productive forces by an irrational ownership structure; arousing the enthusiasm and creativity of the whole society and nation; fostering an atmosphere and environment in which the people play their

²Marx and Engels (1995a).

proper roles and coexist in harmony; promoting the people's common interests at the current stage while guaranteeing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of people and ensuring that labor-based distribution remains dominant; and, meanwhile, giving scope to the vitality of all types of labor, knowledge, technology, management and capital and enabling a full flow of all sources that create social wealth.

Chinese society is glutted with various contradictions, among which some may escalate; however, the contradiction between the increasing material and cultural needs of the people and the backward social production remains the principal contradiction that covers the whole primary stage of China's socialism and various aspects of social life. The key to resolving this contradiction lies in development, which is of overriding importance. Thus, China's road must stress economic construction as its central task. Only when we concentrate on this main contradiction and nucleus of our work can we clearly observe and grasp the overall situation of the social contradictions and effectively help resolve them.

The Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation means that a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country is built during the primary stage of socialism and that the largest developing country in the world must catch up with and surpass Western developed countries. The road to achieving self-improvement and catching up with and surpassing Western developed countries is not the result of transplanting or cloning Western models but the road of breaking through and transcending the Western developmental paradigm.

The realization of the Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation cannot be reached by any road but China's. The developmental road of modern Western society has developed against the background of capitalism during several hundred years amidst 1000-year-old Western culture, with the support of capital gained by nearly 100 years of overseas colonial plunder. China is unable to undertake, cannot undertake and has no capital to undertake a similar road towards development. In this sense, the Chinese characteristics are not a pretext but are an instinct and a strategy; they are not makeshift but are both necessary and inevitable at all times.

1.4.2 The road to the win-win outcome: deep insight into the theme of the times

With the world's multipolarization, deepening economic globalization, cultural diversification, continued development of the informatization of society, and new breakthroughs in the scientific and technical revolution, profound and complicated changes have taken place in the social structure and unprecedented new behavioral patterns have emerged in human society. However, peace and development remain the themes of the times.

In regard to China's road, China insists on open, cooperative and win-win development; China seeks a peaceful international environment and safeguards and

promotes world peace with its own development; China carries forward the spirit of equality, mutual trust, inclusiveness, mutual learning and win-win cooperation in international relations to jointly safeguard international fairness and justice; and China advocates peace, development and cooperation rather than war, poverty and confrontation and promotes the construction of a world with lasting peace and common prosperity, which represents conscious conformity to the trend of the times and profound insights into the theme of the times. Therefore, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China reaffirmed that “peace and development are the inevitable choices of socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

China’s road along which it pursues peace and development contributes to building a new kind of international relationship. At its core are the following aspects, as mentioned by President Xi Jinping: The countries around the world and their people should share dignity and—for any country, only its people have a final say in the suitability of its developmental road; the countries around the world and their people should share their developmental achievements—it is impossible for the long-term development of the world to be achieved on the basis of some countries becoming increasingly rich while other countries remain poor for a long time; the countries around the world and their people should share the guarantee of security—to cope with complicated international security threats, seeking a cooperative, collective and common security is the only correct solution, while it is unfeasible to act alone or use force.

China’s road, which stresses win-win cooperation, advocates the awareness among the human community of a common destiny—China shows reasonable care for other countries while pursuing its own interests and promotes the common development of various countries while seeking its own development; it turns the world’s opportunities into China’s opportunities and vice versa so that China and the world share the dividend of peaceful development and the common interests of human beings are supported. As emphasized by President Xi Jinping when delivering a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, “in order to keep pace with the times, as we have physically entered the 21st century, we cannot continue to mentally stay in the past and the old times of colonial expansion as well as within the old framework of the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game.”

With its logic of civilization, China’s road tells the world that the free development of each country and nation is the precondition for the free development of all countries and nations. History has no ending; in human society, not merely one road—the capitalist road—is available. Many new roads must be carved out; there has never been only a single value in human society, and the coexistence of diverse values should be the value landscape for all of human society.

1.4.3 The road to innovation: conscious assumption of a solemn mission

Upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics is the solemn mission of the members of the Communist Party of China and their solemn

commitment to the Chinese people. However, it is also a long-term, arduous historical task and an unprecedented new road that has never been described in detail. Early breakthroughs in the fundamental issues—what socialism should look like and how to carry out the construction of socialism—have been made, but the mission is far from being finalized. To accomplish the mission and honor the commitment, it is essential to be brave in practice; to change and innovate; to center our attention on the practical issues concerning China's reform, opening up and modernization; to perform the tasks we have undertaken; to apply Marxist theory; and to focusing on theoretical thinking regarding the actual problems, new practices and new development. Therefore, the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a road to innovation.

- The road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is a road to opening up and innovation through which new thoughts, ways and practices enrich and develop socialism.

The more than 30 years of traveling down the socialist road towards development with Chinese characteristics is an innovative road that involves continuously emancipating the mind, keeping abreast of the times and forging ahead. The road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics answers the major question—What is socialism, and how can socialism be constructed?—with an innovative spirit. The road reveals the essence of socialism to establish the basic line for the primary stage of socialism and open a new chapter for socialism with Chinese characteristics; it answers the major question—What is the Party, and how can it be built?

It upholds the building of the Party for the people's interests and the scientific, democratic and law-based governance of the country for the people. It adopts a broad perspective and scientific methods to forge a strong core leadership for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics; it answers the major question—What is development, and how can it be pursued? It puts the people first; upholds all-around, coordinated and sustainable development; and elevates our understanding of the laws governing socialism with Chinese characteristics to a new level.

- The road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is an innovative road that aims to explore the dialectical unity between the scientific logic of socialist theory and the historical logic of China's social development.

Social practice cannot be divorced from theoretical logic, and theoretical logic does not amount to realistic social practice. Socialism with Chinese characteristics faces such issues and offers innovative answers. Marxist classical writers said that in the new socialist society, social production not only ensures that all members of society live a well-off and increasingly improved material life but also guarantees the full and free development and utilization of their physical power and intelligence. The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly proposed eight basic requirements for socialism with Chinese characteristics. To consistently uphold the basic principles of scientific socialism, leave no room to

violate these basic principles, and under any circumstance bear in mind the most prominent national condition—the primary stage of socialism—to firmly proceed from the greatest reality—the primary stage of socialism, the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is pursued by giving scope to the people’s sense of ownership; emphasizing social fairness and justice; making the achievements of development available to all of the people; uniting all of the forces that can be united; to the greatest extent possible adding systematic, institutional and policy innovations, including harmonious factors, to take a realistic path for turning theoretical principles into the actual social state; and enabling socialism with Chinese characteristics to become a scientific socialism rooted in contemporary China.

- The road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a road to a new civilization that enables us to tackle common difficulties in the development of human society and achieve sustainable development in China and the world.

Over about four hundred years, the traditional industrial civilization has led to unprecedented material abundance and great economic prosperity in human society, but it has also caused a sword of Damocles to hang over the heads of human beings—air pollution, environmental degradation and resource depletion. The development of human society cannot be stopped, but such development cannot be conducted regardless of the consequences; after all, we have only one earth.

As an important aspect of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics, the socialist ecological civilization is a new type of civilization resulting from combining the thoughts that man is an integral part of nature and that man should coexist with nature in harmony in Chinese civilization while making creative transformations. It combines industrial development with ecological protection to take a new road towards industrialization through sound and rapid development and aims to transform China into a strong and prosperous country with blue sky, green land and clean water, shaping a new road towards a civilization that sustains the capable development of human society. In this sense, China’s road contributes a new developmental mode and a new type of civilization to the world.

2 Theoretical Confidence

Mao Zedong said: “Practice should give birth to reason.” As the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is followed, reason with Chinese characteristics will certainly come into being, and this reason is the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Because of the thought inheritance, the quality of theory, the Chinese manner and the spirit of the times, we have reason to be confident and are qualified to be confident in this thought system.

2.1 *Consistent Thought Inheritance*

Like any theory, the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is based on its origins and roots. The expression “the latest achievement in the localization of Marxism in China” reveals its thought inheritance.

The thought inheritance of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics can be traced to 170, or even 500, years ago. The value appeal of socialism; the positions, views, methods of Marxism; and the basic principles of scientific socialism are available in the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The core thoughts of the system—including the communist ideal, the leadership of the proletarian party, the economic system based on public ownership and work-based distribution, the people being the creators of history, and the all-around development of the people—are inherited from the Communist Party of China’s forefathers. At present, some people regard the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics as Marxism 3.0 and a new version of scientific socialism; this view is vivid and apt since it gives expression to the perfect harmony between innovation and inheritance. The system has a new perspective but fundamentally remains part of Marxism.

The more than 90-year history of the Communist Party of China tells us that as a Marxist political party, the Communist Party of China cannot abandon Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought; otherwise, the Party’s soul, foundation and right to exist would be lost, and political bankruptcy would be unavoidable.³ Only when the Communist Party of China is guided by Marxism can it, as the vanguard of the working class, the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, always reflect socialism’s epochal character, master the laws that govern, be creative, grasp the overall situation, draw a distinction between right and wrong and identify the correct direction amidst complicated circumstances, gain insights into how Chinese society is developing and will develop, and understand its developmental direction so that it can confidently lead the Chinese people to become strong and prosperous and shepherd the Chinese nation through its great rejuvenation.

The thought inheritance is embodied in building on the shoulders of a giant. “The latest achievement” refers to a forefather. This giant and forefather is Mao Zedong, whose thought is considered the first leap in combining Marxism with China’s reality. Mao Zedong Thought logically and historically makes it possible to achieve the second leap in the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The exploration in Mao Zedong Thought of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is the direct theoretical preparation and basic thought prerequisite for the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The contents of Mao Zedong Thought regarding the basic and main contradictions of socialist society, the correct handling of major relations in a socialist society, and the contradictions among the people have become the valuable thought resources for the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. More

³Lenin (1986).

importantly, the soul of Mao Zedong Thought—seeking truth from facts, the mass line and independence—remains the root that cannot be forgotten at any time and cannot be abandoned in the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

2.2 *Theoretical Quality: Well Targeted*

Theories are not designed to enhance beauty. They cannot be like the arrow that is not shot, though it is regarded as a good arrow. A good arrow should be shot at a target. The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics—the arrow—should be used to shoot at the target—the construction, reform and development of contemporary China.

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the latest theoretical achievement made by combining Marxism with China's national conditions, keeping pace with the times and sharing socialism's destiny with the masses. It is the latest thought resulting from integrating Chinese civilization, Chinese wisdom, the spirit of the times and the achievements of human civilization. It is the latest deep scientific understanding of the law that governs the Communist Party of China's governance of the country, the laws of socialist construction and human social development. It is the latest successful answer for the developing countries to develop and keep up with the trend of the world in the new international situation and create their unique advantages amidst the tide of globalization. Marxist classical writers said that principles are the result of research rather than the starting point for research; these principles are not applied in nature and human history but are the result of abstraction from nature and human history. It is not the case that nature and human beings adapt to principles; only when principles conform to nature and history can they be correct. This was the only view of materialism.⁴ The great practice that the overwhelming majority of people remakes the world and creates happiness is the motivational force for and source of theoretical innovation. Theoretical innovation separated from practice among the masses is like water without a source and cannot appeal to the masses and guide their practice.

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is based on the most prominent national condition—the primary stage of socialism—to systematically give the preliminary answer to the fundamental question: What is socialism, and how can it be constructed? It raises the understanding of socialism to a new scientific level, makes a scientific judgment about the historical orientation of the Party, and keeps pace with the times to answer the major question: What is the Party, and how can it be built? It initiates the new great project for Party building and addresses the characteristics of the new stage of China's development to creatively answer the major realistic question: What is development, and how can it be

⁴Marx and Engels (1995c).

pursued? It helps us take the scientific road towards development more consciously. In particular, the theory of the primary stage of socialism; the socialist market economic theory; the strategic thought of putting the people first and fostering all-around, coordinated and sustainable development; the theory of a harmonious socialist society; the socialist core values; and the theoretical achievements concerning the advanced level and purity of the political party create new perspectives to deepen the understanding of the laws that structure the Party's governance of the country as well as the laws of socialist construction and of the development of human society.

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is based on the great practice of reform and development in contemporary China. It centers on the tasks we are accomplishing, and it focuses on the application of Marxist theory and on theory regarding practical problems, new practice and new development to improve the theoretical guide and explain and defend the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics so that China is more confident, audacious and assured in undertaking that road.

2.3 Chinese Manner: Self-consciousness and Confidence

With regard to demonstrating the Chinese manner by localizing Marxism in China, a remark once made by Mao Zedong is very pertinent: "Marxism cannot be realized unless it is combined with the Chinese characteristics and takes a certain national form... if Marxism is separated from the Chinese characteristics, it is nothing but an abstract, hollow kind of Marxism. Therefore, Marxism should be concretized in China to incorporate the essential Chinese characteristics on every occasion; in other words, applying Marxism according to Chinese characteristics has become an issue that the whole Party has an urgent need to know and address. The foreign stereotypes must be abolished, hollow and abstract words must be said less often, and dogmatism must come to an end and be replaced with a fresh and vivid Chinese style and manner that are popular among the Chinese people."⁵

At present, some people are highly prone to adopt foreign concepts and words and to stress ancient Greek civilization in theoretical innovations; as a result, the mechanical application of Western theories backfires, these theoretical innovations are useless and annoying to the masses, and the Chinese manner is lost. The Chinese manner is the depository of the more than 5000-year-old Chinese civilization, including the new culture of the Chinese revolution and the construction and reform of the past 100 years. Demonstrating the Chinese manner is the self-conscious pursuit of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and reflects self-confidence. It discards foreign stereotypes in form and in hollow and abstract words. It is simple and clear, fresh and vivid, and popular

⁵Mao (1991).

among the Chinese people. More importantly, its content and quintessence embody China's positions, values and line of thinking.

China's position: transform China, a country that was once bullied by foreign powers and is under development, into an economically developed, politically democratic, culturally prosperous, socially harmonious, and ecologically sound country so that it stands firm in the East as a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country of the 21st century. China's value: ensure that the Chinese people become the master of their country, that the people live a better life with dignity, and that all of the more than 1.3 billion Chinese people have the opportunity to freely develop in an all-around way. China's line of thinking: adopt the theory that "man is an integral part of nature" to observe the universe; approach international affairs with the philosophy that all nations should live side by side in perfect harmony; use the philosophy of harmony within diversity to build society; interact with others with the thought that benevolence means love for others.

It should be noted that the Chinese manner revitalizes China and nourishes the world. As the world faces increasingly severe environmental problems, the theory that "man is an integral part of nature" offers a good starting point for human beings to restore their homeland. As wars may be imminent amidst the disputes and conflicts over interests in today's world, "do to others as you would have them do to you" is the only choice for fulfilling different nations' respective desires. When human society is obsessed with finding a "unique solution" for social development, the philosophy of harmony within diversity tells the world that there are other splendid possibilities.

2.4 The Spirit of the Times: Innovative Development

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is open and full-fledged. It continues innovative development along with the deepening of its practice and the evolution of the times to reflect a practical appeal and to demonstrate the spirit of the times.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the new-generation members of the Communist Party of China, with Xi Jinping as General Secretary, have faced, conformed to and cultivated the new normal and have made practical, institutional and theoretical innovations. For example, the Chinese dream is expressed in a popular and amicable way to shape the "mass version" of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Moreover, the Party has vowed to build a well-off society in an all-around way, comprehensively intensify the reform, comprehensively promote the rule of law in the country and comprehensively strengthen Party discipline—these action plans support and promote each other and specify the blueprint, road map and schedule that will enable socialism

with Chinese characteristics to advance in an all-around way. Furthermore, a number of new discourses, including “One Belt and One Road”, “the new type of relationship among the great powers”, “China-Latin American Countries Time”, and “welcome to take a free ride around China’s development”, paint a new picture of the peaceful development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and contribute China’s wisdom regarding contemporary international relations and China’s plan for improving global governance.

These contents are vividly and fully reflected in the important speeches delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping. The important speeches made by the General Secretary offer profound thoughts and answers concerning a number of major, theoretical and practical problems: What is the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation? How should we realize it? What responsibilities should be assumed by the Communist Party of China during this great rejuvenation? What road should be taken in China’s national governance? These speeches present major innovations in the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and they enrich and develop the theoretical system.

3 Institutional Confidence

The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics incorporates the fundamental political system, the basic political system, the basic economic system, and other systems and institutions; combines the national democratic system with the grass-roots democratic system; and ensures that the Party’s leadership is upheld, the people become the master of the country and the country is governed under the rule of law. It conforms to China’s national conditions and epitomizes the characteristics and advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and it is the fundamental institutional guarantee for China’s development and progress.

3.1 Objective Requirements for the Cause of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

For the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the road and the theoretical system constitute a beautiful blueprint, but the situation cannot gradually improve without institutions. The road, theories and institutions jointly support the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

According to the Communist Party of China, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics serves as the fundamental institutional guarantee for China’s development and progress. This viewpoint fully recognizes and highly values the status of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics in contemporary China.

- Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards. Acting willfully cannot result in the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, institutions are necessary for shaping the behavioral pattern of the whole society.

The most basic function of the institutions lies in adopting an incentive and constraint mechanism to delimit the activities of the social players and develop norms or standards for their behaviors. The institutions spell out what can or cannot be and what is prohibited. The social players should follow the institutional requirements for thinking, acting and living. After numerous repetitions, these requirements naturally evolve into the activity modes of the social players. Under the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Party members and cadres and the masses can come to know the behaviors favorable for that cause—the behaviors that are encouraged—and the behaviors detrimental to the cause—the behaviors that are prohibited. With long-term influence, the behavioral pattern of the whole society will become more consistent with the requirements for the development of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

- What aspect of the system is dependable? The institutions are fundamental, are long term and have a vital bearing on the overall situation and stability of the system. In the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the institutions are essential for guaranteeing achievements in development.

Since the members of the Communist Party of China carved out the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics, under the guidance of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, a number of achievements have been made in developing the cause. These achievements include material ones—such as an increase in the economic aggregate and improvements in national strength and the people’s living standard—and achievements in mind-sets and social relations, such as the new economic, political and social operational modes; scientific, economic and political relationships and social relationships; and progressive thoughts and philosophies. The material achievements are relatively stable and easy to sustain, while the achievements in mind-sets and social relationships are easy to change. However, failure to maintain the achievements in mind-sets and social relationships will ruin the material achievements.

To retain and consolidate the achievements in mind-sets and social relationships that have been made during the more than 30 years of development of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and even during the more than 60 years of exploration of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics—for example, to ensure that “they are not changed because of changes in leaders, leaders’ views and attention”, as mentioned by Deng Xiaoping—a number of institutional arrangements are necessary. The reform of the economic system has been carried out to consolidate the achievements of the economic reform. The steady reform of the political system has been conducted to consolidate and carry forward the achievements in the development of the political civilization. The reforms of the cultural and social systems have been implemented to promote

vigorous cultural development and great cultural prosperity as well as social harmony.

- Institutions are the result of experience. The establishment of institutions marks the entry of socialism with Chinese characteristics into a satisfactory stage.

At the early stage of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Deng Xiaoping said that we crossed the river by feeling the stones; we did not know where we were going or how deep the water was. Indeed, in developing new undertakings, “crossing the river by feeling the stones” is unavoidable; however, it is not necessary to “cross the river by feeling the stones” when we again encounter the same situation. The establishment of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics means that we no longer need to “cross the river by feeling the stones” in many things because past successful experiences and good methods have evolved into institutions, and we can act according to them. These institutions have even paved the way for our future development and ensured that we no longer need to take a roundabout course to avoid self-inflicted setbacks.

3.2 Natural Practice of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

We have been discussing the road and the theoretical system for a very long time, whereas this is the first time that the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been expounded. This is because the formation of the institutions needs conditions and accumulation, and the deepening of practice is the foundation for such a formation.

With more than 60 years of arduous experimentation and more than 30 years of great advancements, breakthroughs have been made on various fronts of socialism with Chinese characteristics, laying a solid practical foundation for shaping the system.

- In the economic field, actions have been taken to unswervingly consolidate and develop the public sector of the economy and to steadfastly encourage, support and guide the development of the non-public sectors; the new pattern in which diverse sectors of the economy compete on an equal footing and promote each other has taken shape, and the basic economic system in which public ownership remains dominant and diverse forms of ownership develop side by side has been well established.
- In the political field, the democratic forms have become diverse and the democratic channels have widened; democratic elections, democratic decision making, democratic management and democratic supervision have become normal practices in daily political life; and the people’s rights to know, participate, express and supervise have been increasingly effectively guaranteed. As participatory parties, the democratic parties have long coexisted with the

Communist Party of China; the democratic parties and the Communist Party supervise and treat each other sincerely, and the democratic parties share weal or woe with the Party; there is equality, solidarity and high stability among ethnic groups, and the regions inhabited by ethnic groups have rapidly developed; and great progress has been made in villagers' self-governance in rural areas and residents' self-governance in urban communities. All of these fruitful practical achievements ensure that the fundamental political system—the system of the people's congress, multi-party cooperation, and the political consultation system led by the Communist Party of China; the system of regional and national autonomy; and the grassroots masses' self-governance system as well as other basic political systems are deeply rooted in the political life of Chinese society.

- In the cultural field, the highest priority has always been assigned to social benefits; vigorous cultural development and a great strategy for cultural prosperity through combining economic and social benefits are being carried out to ensure that China's social and cultural undertakings and the cultural industry complement each other. Policies for supporting non-profit cultural undertakings, developing the cultural industry and encouraging cultural innovations have been implemented at the institutional level. Cultural and institutional innovations are being vigorously made.
- To adapt to changes in the increasingly diverse social structure, a society that is more open and increasing social appeals, and new requirements for the building of a harmonious socialist society, new social institutions have gradually taken shape.

We should make a distinction between the practical foundation and the institutional foundation. While fully recognizing the fundamental role of the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in shaping the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we should not forget the institutional foundation for the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is the basic system of socialism. The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics does not and cannot emerge in the absence of institutions and is developed based on the basic system of socialism. The basic system of socialism is exactly the result of the second great event accomplished by the Communist Party of China in more than 60 years. The basic system of socialism establishes the basic institutional principles, the institutional value, and even the institutional patterns for the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. If we separate the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics from the basic system of socialism, we forget its origin and may even rebel against orthodoxy.

Of course, one reason that the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics has become successful in Chinese society is that it is mainly a naturally evolving rather than merely a designed system, and it is an endogenous rather than an exogenous system. In regard to the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, some lessons from the previous institutional construction of Chinese society have been learned: no great leap forward and no utopia exist in the institutions; the institutions are not abstractly addressed; and the institutional construction is based

on a deep understanding and application of the law of social development, a clear understanding of China's social developmental stage and an extensive practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

3.3 Composition of the System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a complete interconnected institutional system that is the result of the self-improvement and development of the system of socialism over several decades in the fields of the economy, politics, culture, and society as well as in other fields. This system includes the fundamental political system; the basic political system; the basic economic system; and specific systems based on the fundamental political system, the basic political system and the basic economic system, including the economic, political, cultural and social systems. Different types of systems at different levels play their respective roles and coordinate with each other to promote the development of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

First, the fundamental political system. This system is the foundation, the core, and the main mark of the socialist institutional system and is representative of it. If the fundamental political system changes, the fundamental nature of the social institutional system will be modified accordingly. Under the system of the people's congress as the fundamental political system, all the powers of the People's Republic of China belong to the people, and the people manage state affairs, economic and cultural undertakings and social affairs by various means according to law. As mentioned by Hu Jintao, the system of the people's congress is an important means and the highest form of realization by which the Chinese people become the masters of the country, and it is the important institutional carrier of China's socialist political civilization. Deviation from the system of the people's congress means deviation from socialism.

Second, the basic political system and the basic economic system. If the fundamental system is likened to a building, the basic systems are the pillars of the building. The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system led by the Communist Party of China, the system of national regional autonomy, the grass-roots masses' self-governance system, other basic political systems and the basic economic system in which public ownership remains dominant and diverse forms of ownership develop side by side determine the basic political and economic pattern of Chinese society at the primary stage of socialism and are the backbone of the institutional guarantee for developing socialist democratic politics and promoting a socialist market economy.

Third, systems and mechanisms. These aspects are the concretization of the basic social systems and the ways to express and realize them. If social systems and mechanisms do not play their roles, the basic social systems cannot work and their objective to safeguard social relationships, social nature and order cannot be

achieved. If the social systems and mechanisms are improper and inappropriate, or if their specific institutions are not completely correct, concrete and comprehensive and do not support each other, the implementation of the basic social systems will be affected. We stress that the reform of the systems and mechanisms makes them more adaptable to the fundamental system and the basic systems.

It should be stressed that various institutions within one institutional system must be logically consistent, and the institutions cannot be simply introduced from various institutional systems that exist elsewhere; otherwise, there will be conflicts and overlap among them. Conflicts among the institutions will not only invalidate the institutions themselves but will also severely affect their authority and the reasons for their existence. For example, if we indiscriminately imitate the multi-party rotating governance system, the separation of the three powers and the two-chamber system used in Western social institutional systems, these institutions would not address the issues and might even cause disasters that would lead to disorder and social chaos in our institutional system.

Finally, the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics. This system is a text embodiment and the standardized expression of the institutions. The socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is marshaled by the Constitution and includes various legal branches, such as Constitution-related laws, civil and commercial laws as the backbone, and laws and norms at various levels such as administrative and local rules and regulations. The socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics incorporates the development of various national undertakings under the rule of law and ensures that laws are available regarding such aspects as the construction of national, economic, political, cultural, social and ecological civilizations to legally address issues that are fundamental and long term and have a vital bearing on the overall situation and stability of national development.

3.4 Concentrated Reflection on the Characteristics and Advantages of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been developed during the process of promoting the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics; it provides protection for better pushing forward the cause. Therefore, as stressed by Hu Jintao, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics epitomizes the characteristics and advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

- Institutional stand: the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics always favors the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people.

The research on institutional philosophy tells us that the institutions are non-neutral and that different institutions serve different advantaged groups; the attention paid to the interests of the social groups varies greatly with different

institutions. The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics upholds the nature of socialism and the principle that development is pursued for and by the people; its institutional logic is essentially favorable for guaranteeing and realizing the fundamental interests of the people.

- Institutional value: the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics always focuses on fairness, justice and common prosperity. What is the superiority of the essence of socialism? The answer is common prosperity. Deng Xiaoping said: “The great superiority of socialism is the common prosperity; this is an element that reflects the essence of socialism.”

What is the intrinsic requirement of socialism? The answer is fairness and justice. The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized: “Realizing social fairness and justice is the intrinsic requirement of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics presents the value orientation of achieving common prosperity and ensuring that the people share the achievements of reform and development; it gives greater prominence to the realization of social fairness and justice; it contains a combination of various means for properly coordinating the interest relationships of various elements of society; it allows some regions and some people to become rich before others; it focuses on eliminating polarization to ultimately achieve common prosperity; and it fully manifests the essence and attributes of socialism to make the general public have more confidence in and higher expectations of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

- Institutional performance: the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics can concentrate its resources on accomplishing great goals.

Institutions are developed to handle affairs and should not be used as decorations or obstructions; therefore, the performance of institutions is the key indicator for measuring their advantages. Concentrating resources on accomplishing great goals is a noticeable characteristic of socialism and is a recipe for the successful practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The internal mechanism and operational mode of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics determine whether the system can develop a powerful unifying will and an organizational strength; unify various forces across the country into a whole; organize and mobilize all economic, political and social resources; and make the people at various levels unite as one entity to overcome difficulties, rapidly and efficiently respond to various emergencies and fulfill tasks. The success of concentrating resources on accomplishing great goals was vigorously proved by the earthquake relief work, the hosting of the Olympic Games and coping with the international financial crisis.

- Institutional inclusiveness: the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics can mobilize all the active factors.

The enthusiasm and creativity of the whole society and the whole nation are always the most decisive factors in developing the cause of socialism with Chinese

characteristics. However, with the differentiation of the strata in Chinese society, social relationships have become increasingly complicated. It is not easy or governable to promote the common interests of the people at the current stage and to allow special interests to different groups while guaranteeing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. Play should be given to the vitality of all labor, knowledge, technology, management and capital to fully tap all the sources of social wealth while upholding work-based distribution as the mainstay of the system. The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics takes all factors into consideration and seeks common ground while reserving differences; it creates a broad institutional space and provides an effective institutional guarantee for eliminating the adverse factors unfavorable to giving scope to the people's enthusiasm, removing the unhealthy phenomena that prevent social groups from innovating and advancing, fostering an atmosphere and environment in which social groups can play their respective roles, and fully mobilizing the enthusiasm and creativity of various social strata and groups.

4 Cultural Confidence

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has frequently talked about Chinese culture: when talking about the outlook of China's cultural values, he has called for carrying forward and sublimating traditional Chinese culture; in regard to national governance, he has vowed to enable a creative conversion and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture; with regard to Party building, he has reminded Party members that they should draw nourishment from Chinese culture; and he has seized opportunities to showcase the unique charm of Chinese civilization for the international community during his visits to foreign countries. Why should we value Chinese culture so much, and can we be highly confident in it? The reason is that contemporary Chinese society has a deep understanding and a high consciousness of the need to maintain its spiritual independence.

4.1 Spiritual Independence Is the Precondition for the Economic and Political Independence of a Society

Mao Zedong once said: "Man must have some spirit." Likewise, a country or a society should also have spirit. This is a profound summary of the experience acquired from victory in the Chinese revolution and a valuable warning for those undertaking China's socialist construction. Of course, this spirit is not a general spirit but belongs to a country itself and is generated from that country's own

culture; it acts based on its own practice and remains “independent” amidst interactions with various other kinds of spirit around the world.

What is spiritual independence? In short, it means that a society has, at the spiritual level, its own independent thinking; values; and methods that address how to recognize, analyze, evaluate and solve problems and are not controlled or swayed by others. When a society has its own unique way of thinking about how to understand the world, its own distinctive value standpoint for its evaluation of the world, and unique ways of interacting with the world, it can be regarded as maintaining its spiritual independence.

For a society, spiritual independence is the precondition for economic, political and social independence. If a society blindly follows the lead of others at a spiritual level, it cannot spiritually figure out what is good, what should occur and what is meaningful; it will fail to take an unprecedented road, establish new institutions that are superior to others, or confidently and unflinchingly proceed along the road that it chooses.

Spiritual independence in Chinese society has never been an issue. The 5000-year-old history of Chinese civilization, its tenacious struggle over more than 100 years of fighting, the exploration and practice of the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation are the best proofs of spiritual independence in Chinese society. These things would be unimaginable, even impossible, without high self-consciousness and full confidence.

However, spiritual independence has become an issue that cannot be ignored, or at least one for which preparations must be made in contemporary Chinese society. The problem is related to the pattern of the modern international community and the developmental orientation of Chinese society.

The current pattern of the international community is dominated by the developmental mode and social values of the Western developed countries. All countries and groups make products, accumulate wealth and share dividends according to this pattern, but this pattern and its conditions are favorable mainly for the developed countries. To protect their vested interests, the Western developed countries use every means to maintain this pattern; they reinforce and support their developmental mode and values according to it and even label it as the “universal” and “everlasting” one. With the impact of the existing pattern and the penetration of strong ideology, some people in Chinese society have unconsciously surrendered in terms of ideology: Can China be an exception to a pattern that is universal elsewhere in the world? Why do we ask for trouble, since capitalism in human society has come to an end?

More importantly, as global, economic, political and cultural exchanges become more intense and China more open to the outside world, Chinese society needs, and is introducing, many aspects of Western society, from technology to management and institutions, from signs on expressways, promotional trademarks and labels in hypermarkets to the market economic system for resource allocation, the model of mixed ownership property rights for enterprise operations and the income distribution system for factor-based distribution. Moreover, these aspects must be

“comprehensively” introduced many times; if they are introduced partially or out of context, no positive benefits will be obtained, and suffering and disadvantages that are not seen in Western society may occur. Therefore, some people in Chinese society argue: Why should the Chinese people have their own spiritual independence? Is the spirit of others more “comprehensive” because they must be “comprehensively” introduced?

Spiritual independence in Chinese society would gradually be crippled and weakened under such a scenario; accordingly, China’s economic, political and social developmental practices are subject to increasing pressure and challenges. Therefore, the people in contemporary Chinese society present the issue of “spiritual independence” not out of unfounded worry but for the sake of taking remedial measures.

With respect to spiritual independence, we should stress the following two remarks.

First, attaching importance to spiritual independence aims to transcend it.

When speaking of the value outlook, General Secretary Xi Jinping quoted the three-realm theory from Chinese Zen culture: When a person has no consciousness, he or she only catches sight of the mountain and water before reaching them; after developing a preliminary consciousness, he or she sees no mountain and water before reaching them; after becoming really conscious, he or she once again catches sight of the mountain and water before reaching them. This appears to be a return to a previous state, but it is not a simple return; it is a spirally escalating return at a higher level. This metaphor can also be used in our cognition of spiritual independence. In the absence of spiritual independence, we indiscriminately accept things from other parts of the world by believing that all of them are good. In fact, they are not all necessarily good, in which case, we have no idea of spiritual independence. When we have a consciousness of spiritual independence, we will consciously take up arms—in terms of the national culture—to defend our independence and dignity. The familiar remark that “something that is more national is more shared by the world” manifests the mind-set at this stage, where importance is attached to spiritual independence. When we enjoy full spiritual independence, it will be internalized as practical independence. Self-confidence and self-improvement in practice make it certain that we can use any institution from anywhere in the world. The world eventually becomes national, but spiritual independence is transcended at that stage. Chinese society is in the process of safeguarding the first stage, keeping a foothold on the second and moving towards the third. We hope that Chinese society will pay attention to spiritual independence without overindulging in it. When Chinese society no longer needs to discuss the issue of spiritual independence, it will truly enjoy full spiritual independence.

Second, spiritual independence is ultimately proved by achievements in economic, political and social practice.

We have often discussed the functions of spiritual independence and the significance of culture for it, but in such discussions, we should not cause hypercorrection and fall into the set pattern of idealism. Karl Marx said that notions are nothing but the material things that are transplanted into and remade in human

brains.⁶ Spiritual independence aims to achieve practical independence. Spiritual independence also must be proven and further reinforced by practice. If there is no economic, political and social independence, spiritual independence is like water without a source and trees without roots. In contemporary Chinese society, the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics is becoming increasingly wide, and the Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is closer to us; this is the strong material foundation and goal for spiritual independence.

4.2 Chinese Culture Is an Inexhaustible Source for the Spiritual Independence of Chinese Society

Being aware of spiritual independence is important, but taking care of and developing it is more important. Spiritual independence does not emerge out of a void and from grandiloquence. The soil to nourish it and the source to giving birth to it are necessary, and those resources come from Chinese culture. As mentioned by General Secretary Xi Jinping, Chinese culture contains the deepest spiritual pursuit and the most fundamental spiritual gene of the Chinese nation; Chinese culture represents the unique spiritual mark of the Chinese nation, which indicates the importance of the contribution of Chinese culture to the spiritual independence of Chinese society. We explain only the following three aspects.

- Chinese culture gives birth to the unique way of thinking in Chinese society: the holistic line of thought that man is an integral part of nature.

Thinking is the deepest attribute of spiritual independence, and different ways of thinking result in different outlooks. Unlike the atomistic thinking of Western culture, which features continuous stripping, differentiation and segmentation and focuses on analysis, the line of thought in Chinese culture emphasizes the whole with continuous integration, diffusion and fusion and underlines the holistic observation and understanding of the world. For example, in terms of the relationship between man and the world, unlike Western culture, in which nature is opposed to man and man infinitely plunders nature, the Chinese people, nourished by Chinese culture, regard nature and man as a whole and believe that man and nature interact with each other and are interdependent, that man is supported by natural resources and should not forget to nourish and give things back to nature. This is the global outlook that “man is an integral part of nature” recently emphasized by General Secretary Xi Jinping and familiar to modern society. Moreover, regarding the relationship between the self and the other, the Chinese people do not believe that those who are not part of our nation do not share the same global outlook; on the contrary, the Chinese people uphold the international perspective and worldview that all nations coexist in perfect harmony, as mentioned

⁶Marx and Engels (1995b).

by General Secretary Xi Jinping—this worldview also means that every nation has strong points and that nations should learn from each other in order to build a world with a common destiny.

- The Chinese culture shapes the fundamental pursuit of values of Chinese society: the outlook regarding the value of harmony that there is harmony in diversity.

Value is the most fundamental attribute of spiritual independence, and behaviors and worlds vary with different values. Regardless of the ontology—which states that the world is unique—or the religious outlook—which establishes a supreme “god”, “uniqueness” always lingers in the Western value outlook. However, in Chinese society, the highest principle that governs Yin and Yang is not any one thing but a state of harmony. Take music as an example: only when all five tones are available can a wonderful piece of music be produced; if only one tone is available, the music becomes unpleasant to hear. In the boundless universe, a great variety of things do not appear with the same look and nature, but they grow freely and develop equally according to their own looks and natures, thus generating a state of harmony that includes new things. A famous saying in Chinese culture summarizes this perspective: Harmony generates diverse things and, if following the same pattern, will backfire. This saying reveals the highest realm of the value advocated by Chinese culture: harmony in diversity.

- Chinese culture brings about the basic developmental method in Chinese society: the methodology of incessant change.

The basic method for recognizing and remaking the world in a society is the most direct embodiment of a shift from spiritual independence to practice. In Chinese culture, there is no external social state. Constant changes contribute to prosperity, and continuous renovations result in progress, so new social states gradually emerge with our sustained efforts. The world’s changes do not develop on a unidimensional basis. It is necessary to draw the impetus and wisdom for self-improvement from history; we should not change our course in pursuing goals, and we should not deviate from our original goals after a long journey. The solution is not a life-or-death struggle; it lies in advancing with unswerving determination in a coordinated and balanced way.

This line of thought as well as the values and methods of Chinese culture have shaped the spiritual independence of Chinese society and provided a high level of confidence in it. As the contemporary world faces increasingly severe environmental problems, the theory that man is an integral part of nature delivers a good starting point for human beings to restore their homeland. As the present-day world witnesses potential wars as a result of interest disputes and conflicts, harmony in diversity may be the only choice for resolving such clashes. As human society increasingly indulges in the idea of the “unique solution” for social development, the concept of “endless improvement” shows that other possibilities and approaches

are meaningful. This is the profound significance of the following requirement specified by General Secretary Xi Jinping: spell out the unique creation, value philosophy and distinctive characteristics of Chinese culture.

4.3 Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Is Rooted in the Fertile Soil of Chinese Culture

When a society maintains its spiritual independence, independence in social development will naturally follow. From a long-term perspective, we should not yield to others' oppression and slavery but seek independence and emancipation—this has been the struggle of the Chinese nation for more than 170 years. From a short-term perspective, we should not mechanically copy others' methods but should take our own road—this has been the exploration and practice of the socialist road in Chinese society for more than 60 years. Looking into the future, we should combine confidence with innovations in theories, institutions and roads and ensure that the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics continues to widen in the historical course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

We ascribe the reasons for China taking its own road and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics to national conditions and historical necessity. This connection is indeed a fact and is very important, but it is not enough; the real reason is China's unique cultural tradition.

Over more than 100 years, not a few nations of the world have sought independence and emancipation, but few countries have chosen and persist in Marxism and socialism. Among them, China is the outstanding one owing to the alignment of the spirit of Chinese culture and socialism and even its innocuous integration with Marxism.

In the line of thought of Chinese culture, one should first cultivate the moral character and then manage the family, govern the country and make the world peaceful; individuals do not highlight the self in the development of the country and society but find the significance of existence amidst their integration into the family, country and world. Such a cultural spirit, naturally, becomes collectivism in the value outlook and embodies public ownership and common prosperity in the socialist manner of distribution. This is very clearly shown in the historical path of socialism adopted by Chinese society for approximately 100 years. When the cultural mentality that considers inequality rather than want as the cause of trouble is enlarged by the fact that exploitation occurs in economic and political life, the people will naturally accept private ownership, have some hope for public ownership and instinctively develop a desire for common prosperity. Furthermore, recognizing the Communist Party of China as the core of leadership in Chinese society is also a form of the continuity of the cultural mentality. Now that we believe that sages are available anywhere, both sage and ordinary human can focus their minds on heaven and earth, sacrifice themselves for their people, recover lost

knowledge to inherit traditions from other sages, and develop peace for all ages. Why can corresponding expectations not exist for the Communist Party of China, which adopts an advanced faith to pull together the outstanding members of its society? Furthermore, why is the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics a peaceful road towards development, and why is the China Threat theory groundless? General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed the root cause in a recent speech: “The Chinese nation has no gene in its blood for invading others and dominating the world”. Therefore, from another perspective, neither Marxism nor socialism chose Chinese society, but the Chinese culture chose Marxism and socialism.

Some people in Western society have always questioned China’s vows not to take Western road and copy Western notions because in fact, the guiding thought for China—Marxism—and China’s road towards development—socialism—were introduced from Western society. Although this view seems to be based on fact and irrefutable, it is not true. Socialism with Chinese characteristics does not merely mean that the words “with Chinese characteristics” are added after the word “socialism” and “Chinese characteristics” are simply combined with “socialism” on a practical level. Similarly, the localization of Marxism in China does not merely mean that Marxist classics are translated into Chinese and mechanically applied and Marxism is rigidly adopted to address China’s issues; on the contrary, it is a new theory and practice rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture and immersed in that culture.

Of course, such an analysis does not suggest that traditional Chinese culture originally contained Marxism and socialism, but it means that when the seeds of Marxism and socialism were sown through a political revolution, they were able to robustly grow in the fertile soil of Chinese culture and become a new creation resting on the shoulders of a giant and new content in Chinese culture. This is the reason that China’s road is a result of an inheritance from its more than 5000-year-old civilization, as stressed by General Secretary Xi Jinping, though the history of socialism in the world is only 500 years old. Tracing the road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics over 5000 years and making it a road towards political development and towards the development of civilization relies on the cultivating role of Chinese culture.

4.4 The Realization of Chinese Culture Amidst Innovative Development Is the “Present Progressive” Tense

Two concepts—Chinese traditional culture and Chinese culture—are used concurrently in China. Many people indiscriminately use the two concepts. Actually, there are differences between them. Chinese traditional culture is the “past perfect tense”—its connotation is fixed, though we can develop a new understanding and provide new explanations of it, while Chinese culture is a dynamic concept that

covers the past, present and future and incorporates the splendid 5000-year-old culture into the current prosperity, future glory and the nation's revival.

Without the constant renewal of Chinese culture, the spiritual independence of China's forefathers could not save their unworthy descendants from sitting idle and eating without producing. Even if the good things of the forefathers are accepted without reservation, a passenger with an old ticket cannot gain access to today's passenger ship. After all, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation should not and cannot be achieved by returning to the wisdom of the ancients. Therefore, the quintessence of traditional Chinese culture should be inherited in today's Chinese society, but more importantly, we should also stress that Chinese culture is the "present progressive" tense and should ensure that, as a whole, it catches up with and leads the future because the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is conditional upon its development and prosperity.

To ensure that Chinese culture is "present progressive", we should not simply repeat the specific cultural content of traditional Chinese culture but should attach importance to carrying forward the cultural spirit. The abstract inheritance of specific cultural contents also contains the imprint of the past and the original social state; an exaggerated interpretation makes it easy to develop a sense of far-fetchedness. In addition, the role of traditional culture in contemporary society is limited. We should recall the inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells but should not indulge in a heap of musty old paper. The craze for traditional Chinese culture has occurred in various forms in Chinese society over the years, and it is difficult to shape the situation of vigorous development and many accomplishments for that reason. Owing to its transcendence, the cultural spirit greatly enhances the inclusiveness and adaptation of the times and makes it easier to build a barrier-free connection with the new times and mission. This is also why we creatively convert, develop and cultivate the socialist core values. The traditional Chinese virtues have become our outstanding advantages and the most profound source of cultural soft power. Therefore, when talking about the times-oriented development of Chinese culture, General Secretary Xi Jinping stresses: "It is necessary to coordinate the most basic cultural gene of the Chinese nation with the contemporary culture and modern society...carry forward the cultural spirit that spans time and space, and go beyond the national boundary, which is full of eternal charm and contemporary values."⁷

To ensure that Chinese culture is "present progressive", it is also essential to generously introduce all achievements of human civilization, including those of modern Western civilization. The water in a lake is clear because there is water endlessly flowing from a source. Spiritual independence means that instead of being complacent and conservative, we should engage in extensive cultural exchanges to continuously learn from others, turn these lessons into our nutrients, and convert them into our own ideas to develop our national features and make China more independent and stronger. With nourishment from Chinese culture, we transformed

⁷Xi (2013).

Buddhism from the Indian civilization into Chinese Buddhism and turned Marxism and socialism from Western civilization into Marxism with Chinese features and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Thanks to its characteristic of absorbing everything and embracing diversity, every achievement regarding civilization can be creatively converted and developed in Chinese culture. Hysterically rejecting the achievements of foreign civilizations reflects a lack of spiritual independence and confidence as well as weakness.

Of course, such localizing in China requires careful consideration. If the backbone is not retained and there are no good methods, it is likely that we will be remade by others as we attempt to remake them. For example, over the years, we have started to attach importance to globalizing Chinese culture. How can this be done? Others may fail to understand and be uninterested in our system of discourse, so we attempt to use others' methods of discourse and concepts to tell Chinese stories. This approach sounds smart, but in fact, it causes great hidden troubles. Others' cultural ways of thinking lie behind their discourse and concepts. For example, in a movie from several years ago—Kung Fu Panda—both Kung Fu and the panda, and even all of the cultural elements, came from China, but the movie was not produced in China and reflected the authentic Hollywoodian cultural spirit and value outlook. We do not mean that we must stick to China's traditional system of discourse, but we warn those engaged in external publicity to find a manner of discourse that mirrors the real spirit of Chinese culture, which is not something that should be taken for granted, and is understandable to the Western world.

Ensuring that others are remade by us rather than letting others remake us is the bottom line and the greatest way to make certain that Chinese culture is “present progressive”.

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Conclusion

The expression “new normal” was originally adopted by General Secretary Xi Jinping to describe China’s economy; however, recently, it has been increasingly extended by the general public to the political field and even more extensively in China. Obviously, this usage is not scientific or rigorous and is even improper; excessive generalization of this concept will weaken its originally explicit definition. However, who is favored in the new normal of Chinese society? Why is there a willingness to understand the concept in an obviously generalized, even transnational way? From another perspective, this extension represents a deep cognition and great expectations of a series of changes in Chinese society since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party and embodies a high level of trust in and stalwart support of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Xi Jinping as General Secretary. Therefore, an understanding of the new normal is gained by grasping the core of the strategic layout and the essence of the developmental logic of contemporary China.

The new normal is the state in which Chinese society “should” exist and reflects persistence in value.

A society is anything but the situation of man’s wayward nature and a simple game governed by the law of the jungle. In terms of economic development and political choices, the people pay more attention to realizing their ideal social goals and value pursuits through economic and political operations. Therefore, economic action and political endeavors based on specific goals and pursuits are the state in which society “should” exist. The Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream in contemporary Chinese society. The new normal shows adherence to this value.

We can take the new normal regarding the economy as an example. With the end of more than 30 years of high-speed growth, China’s economy entered the state of adjusting, stock-taking and improving its stability. Many people are ill adapted to such a new normal for China’s economy and are struggling to address it or experiencing despair. This attitude is incorrect. Given the great economic strength of contemporary China, it would not be difficult to provide another economic stimulus of 4 trillion yuan, or even 8 trillion or 16 trillion yuan. Why should we rush fruitlessly to take such measures, regardless of the consequences? The new normal

of the economy indicates clearly that the Chinese people have figured out what the economy should look like and the reason for its current situation.

The economy should be “sound”, not merely “rapid”. Economic development should lay a strong material foundation for a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation rather than merely consisting of a numbers game. The achievements of economic development should be shared by the overwhelming majority of the people instead of becoming a tool for a small number of people to accumulate wealth by exerting pressure on society. Economic development should be pursued by proceeding from the current situation and focusing on the future rather than recklessly seeking short-term gains at the expense of long-term development. Thus, General Secretary Xi Jinping said: “Growth must be real and a sustainable growth without exaggeration and with benefits and quality”, which is why Premier Li Keqiang advocated the reform-focused stimulus rather than merely strong fiscal and monetary stimuli.

Slack fiscal and monetary policies can maintain high economic growth for a certain period, and a cheap labor force working for the world can create a huge trade surplus; however, this is a long-term measure and should not be carried out. China, a large country, cannot act as a technical, economic and political vassal for other countries. We can introduce technologies, but we cannot do so indiscriminately. For key technologies, China should rely on itself. We should be good at developing ourselves through the international division of labor and comparative advantages; however, if a large country, especially a large country with an independent political system, does not have a complete modern industrial system, such development is also unimaginable. China has obtained Coca-Cola, Boeing and Airbus and even enormous amounts of dollars through trade, but it cannot acquire a powerful national defense, high-end industries and a high-quality labor force—the standard factors for development in a large country—through trade. These elements entail skilled work, painstaking efforts, patience and perseverance.

The things that should emerge at the economic level naturally lead to those that should arise at the political level. From practical educational activities concerning the mass line to the governance of the country under the rule of law, from institutionally containing power to reaffirming the ideals and faith of the political party, the people will become the masters of the country in both form and fact, and China’s political field will have a new appearance. “Under the Chinese socialist system, things should be decided through good consultations, and the things that have a bearing on the people’s interests should be handled by consulting the people to find the solutions that cover the greatest will and requirements of the whole society; this is the essence of a people’s democracy.” This remark by General Secretary Xi Jinping is the best explanation of the new appearance of China’s politics.

The new normal is the state in which Chinese society “must” exist and reflects the observance of law.

To revitalize a large country, many things should and must be done. “Must” refers to compliance with law because disregard of the law, wanton and wishful acts, indifference to the law and the far-fetched idea of the maintenance of harmony

are traps for the revival of a large country. To realize the Chinese dream and rejuvenate the Chinese nation, we must overcome unhealthy phenomena, resolve deep-seated contradictions and retain identity recognition. Chinese society is praiseworthy in the following aspects.

- To forge iron, one must be strong. As the Communist Party of China serves as the core leadership in Chinese society, it must be advanced and excellent to meet the baseline requirements and establish a foundation for the legitimacy of governance. However, over the years, some members of the political party have lost faith and become dispirited and corrupt. If this situation cannot be fundamentally reversed, the Party will lose its combat effectiveness, its recognition by society will vanish and its long-term governance of the country will not be carried out. Therefore, fighting corruption and strengthening Party self-discipline have overwhelmingly become the first priority of the new normal of politics.
- A reform cannot be reduced to a situation in which a small number of people grab wealth. A reform that does not focus on common prosperity is futureless. A reform cannot solidify the social strata and estrange the groups. The prevalence of the second generation of officials, the rich second generation and poor second generation, is the biggest crisis for the reform. How can the image of the reform be reshaped, and how can a consensus regarding it be achieved? It is imperative to break the interest barriers and comprehensively intensify the reform with the courage of a self-revolution. This is what was accomplished in the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.
- Human society has become increasingly modern, and the recognition of identity has become more and more prominent. Technologies in human society may be universal—a car has four wheels in Western society, and it is unnecessary to deliberately design a three-wheeled car in Eastern society. However, cultural value in human society is not and cannot be universal; otherwise, it is a “standard product” on a modern production line. To become unique among the nations of the world so as not to be overwhelmed and lose our identity amidst globalization, we must keep, care for and carry forward our cultural gene, value source and spiritual home. Only when spiritual independence is preserved can a solid foundation be established for economic and political independence and can real economic and political independence be achieved. When General Secretary Xi Jinping visited the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu, he talked about Confucius in Beijing and culture in countries around the world; he hoped to carry forward traditional Chinese culture, including Confucianism, and seek out the soft power to demonstrate and explain modern China through creative conversion and innovative development.

The new normal is the “original” state of Chinese society and expresses historical continuity.

At present, when interpreting the new normal stressed by Xi Jinping, some people focus on “new”. New leaders, new deeds and new appearances surely

deserve great attention, but the essence of the new normal stressed by Xi Jinping lies in “normal” rather than “new”. We have regarded the deeds, appearances and atmosphere since the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China as the “new normal” because these deeds, appearances and atmosphere are consistent with those of the Communist Party of China in struggling for more than 90 years, governing the country for more than 60 years and reforming for more than 30 years. In fact, they are a continuation of the “original” economic and political state of Chinese society over decades of the new historical period.

More efforts are being made to vigorously fight corruption and beat the tigers. We recall the momentum of the severe punishment of Liu Qinqshan and Zhang Zishan by Mao Zedong. To achieve unceasing reform and opening up, we recollect Deng Xiaoping’s unswerving determination to blaze new trails for reform. The emerging ecological civilization and the new normal of the economy are the great achievements of standing firm, not slackening and avoiding self-inflicted setbacks in scientific development.

The new-generation members of the Communist Party of China not only have received the baton of building socialism with Chinese characteristics from their predecessors but have also received their spirit, will, efforts and deeds as the foundation for development, which cannot be forgotten and abandoned. In this regard, we can gain a deeper understanding by reviewing two speeches delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping.

Xi Jinping made important speeches at the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong’s birth and at the 110th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping’s birth two years after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened. Regarding Mao Zedong, he noted: “The living soul of the Mao Zedong Thought consists in seeking truth from facts, adopting the mass line and achieving independence.” He praised Deng Xiaoping: “He has the lofty ideal of communism, a firm faith in socialism with Chinese characteristics, an ardent love for the people, the theoretical character of always seeking truth from facts, the political courage for continuous innovations, strategic thinking, great foresight and a broad mind.” These three elements of the soul and these characteristics define both late great men, and they are the most prominent signs of two generations of great men; careful observation shows that they represent the self-encouragement, expectations, practice and observance of the new-generation members of the Communist Party of China with Xi Jinping as General Secretary.

The report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China suggested that by carrying forward traditional Chinese culture and retaining the spiritual independence of Chinese society, “we are experiencing many great struggles with new historical characteristics”, and the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China stressed that “we must have the courage and great mind to make self-renovation.” If we consider these aspects of change as the new normal, more generations of “normal” will come, and they will create the “new” expressions, deeds and positions.

Why do we consider this state, which should, must and originally did exist, “new”? It is because “normal” changes from something obvious, hidden, and real

into something unreal. If dazzling jewelry is not often cleaned, it will be covered by dust and lose its luster. If an advanced and outstanding group does not carry out self-examination, it will make honest mistakes. A small number of groups may obtain unfair, unjust special interests through “abnormal” practices; as time passes, “abnormal” will become “normal”, latent rules and false principles will prevail and evils will be unbridled, in which case, “normal” will to some extent become surprisingly fresh and strange. This reminds us that heavy responsibilities must be undertaken and that we have a long way to go to maintain “normal” in Chinese society.

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Index

A

All-out effort to enforce strict Party discipline, [x](#), [111](#)

C

China dream, [1–9](#), [11–19](#), [88](#), [92](#), [97–99](#), [106](#), [122](#), [156](#), [163](#), [172](#), [174](#), [181](#), [183](#)

China power, [3](#), [4](#), [8](#), [14](#), [17](#), [18](#), [35](#), [37](#), [41](#), [51](#), [53](#), [60](#), [61](#), [68](#), [69](#), [72](#), [73](#), [80](#), [82–85](#), [100](#), [103](#), [108–110](#), [114](#), [129](#), [130](#), [132](#), [134](#), [139](#), [145](#), [158](#), [164](#), [183](#)

China road, [1](#), [9](#), [43](#), [58](#), [64](#), [68](#), [90](#), [92](#), [94](#), [97](#), [106](#), [108](#), [111](#), [112](#), [115](#), [116](#), [128](#), [129](#), [145](#), [150](#), [153–157](#), [159](#), [162](#), [164](#), [176](#), [177](#)

China's anti-corruption campaign, [119](#)

Chinese characteristics, [87](#), [91](#), [93](#), [97](#), [98](#), [101–103](#), [105–108](#), [111–116](#), [129](#), [149](#), [150](#), [154](#), [155](#), [158–162](#), [164–172](#), [174](#), [176](#), [177](#), [179](#), [184](#)

Chinese culture, [27](#), [35](#), [36](#), [171](#), [174–179](#), [183](#), [184](#)

Chinese dream, The, [1](#), [3](#), [5–8](#), [11](#), [15](#), [17](#), [19](#), [98](#), [99](#), [163](#), [183](#)

Chinese spirit, [13](#), [16](#), [17](#), [35](#), [36](#), [115](#), [136](#), [157–159](#), [161](#), [163](#), [171](#), [176](#), [178](#)

Chinese traditional culture, [177](#)

Common prosperity, [5](#), [9](#), [17](#), [18](#), [23](#), [32](#), [89](#), [105](#), [112](#), [150](#), [152](#), [153](#), [157](#), [170](#), [176](#), [183](#)

Communist Party of China, [1](#), [9](#), [13](#), [19](#), [21–23](#), [25](#), [27–29](#), [35](#), [40–43](#), [45–49](#), [53](#), [55](#), [57](#), [60](#), [63](#), [65](#), [66](#), [71](#), [76](#), [78](#), [80](#), [84](#), [85](#), [87](#), [91](#), [97–102](#), [106–108](#), [110](#), [112](#), [119–131](#), [134](#), [136–138](#), [141–146](#),

[150–153](#), [155](#), [157](#), [160](#), [161](#), [163–165](#), [167](#), [170](#), [176](#), [181](#), [183](#), [184](#)

Completing the process of building a moderately well-off society in all aspects, [33](#)

Comprehensive framework for promoting the rule of law, [25](#), [33](#), [98–100](#), [105–111](#), [114](#)

Core values, [13](#), [26](#), [27](#), [35](#), [93](#), [103](#), [162](#), [178](#)

Criticism and self-criticism, [124](#), [125](#)

Cultural soft power, [27](#), [34](#), [178](#)

D

Democratic, [4](#), [22](#), [26](#), [27](#), [54](#), [58](#), [64](#), [72](#), [76](#), [79](#), [83](#), [92](#), [97](#), [104](#), [125](#), [133](#), [134](#), [136](#), [137](#), [142](#), [150](#), [153](#), [155](#), [156](#), [158](#), [163](#), [164](#), [166](#), [168](#)

Deng Xiaoping, [18](#), [21](#), [22](#), [25](#), [30](#), [32](#), [45–49](#), [51](#), [53](#), [56–59](#), [81](#), [91](#), [105](#), [112](#), [119](#), [125](#), [128](#), [134](#), [136](#), [137](#), [143](#), [146](#), [150](#), [152](#), [165](#), [170](#), [184](#)

E

Ecological civilization, [14](#), [29](#), [63](#), [91](#), [108](#), [150](#), [154](#), [155](#), [159](#), [169](#), [184](#)

Economic base, [166](#), [168](#)

Expanded in-depth reform agenda, [132](#)

F

Fairness and justice, [10](#), [83](#), [102](#), [103](#), [105](#), [109](#), [111](#), [112](#), [144](#), [153](#), [157](#), [159](#), [170](#)

Faith, [10](#), [15](#), [36](#), [42](#), [55](#), [78](#), [80](#), [85](#), [92](#), [109](#), [113](#), [119](#), [123](#), [125](#), [130](#), [136](#), [141–147](#), [150](#), [177](#), [182](#), [184](#)

Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy, The, [ix](#), [99](#)

H

Harmonious, 4, 9, 14, 28, 55, 59, 76, 78, 88,
100, 139, 149, 152, 155, 157, 159, 162,
163, 167

Harmony but not sameness, 12

I

Ideology, 12, 25, 34, 35, 68, 69, 130, 136, 144,
172

Industrialization, 14, 24, 25, 27, 28, 159

Interest solidification, 61

M

Mao Zedong, 34, 37, 77, 90, 115, 123, 125,
127, 134, 143, 151, 159–162, 171, 184

Market economy, 13, 47, 48, 51, 60, 64, 67, 68,
70, 74, 82, 84, 92, 135, 136, 149, 168

Marx, 13, 43, 59, 100, 104, 106, 130, 140, 145,
151, 155, 173

Marxism, 5, 15, 18, 21, 32, 32, 34, 47, 68, 90,
102, 113, 125, 126, 134–136, 140–143,
150, 153, 154, 160–162, 176, 177, 179

Masses, The, 120–123, 126–128, 133,
138–140, 161, 162, 165

Mass line, 119, 161, 182, 184

Modernization of state governance, 88, 89

N

New great power relations, 10, 12, 164

New normal, 105, 119, 163, 181–184

New strategic layout, ix, 181

P

Peaceful development, 9, 12, 153, 157, 164

People, The, 2, 4–6, 8, 13, 16, 18, 22, 23, 26,
27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43,
49, 50, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60–62, 65, 68, 71,
72, 74, 76, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 89, 93, 95,
96, 101–105, 107–113, 115, 120–122,
127, 130, 134, 143, 144, 147, 151, 153,
155, 156, 159, 162, 168, 170, 171, 176,
182, 184

Political advantage, 39, 40, 42, 44, 85

Political civilization, 84, 133, 165, 168

Political system, 39, 50, 66, 76, 77, 78, 80–82,
84, 85, 92, 113, 146, 164, 167, 168, 182

Political system reform, 49, 54, 66, 71, 76–79,
81, 83–85, 92, 165

Power, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 34, 35, 43, 50, 51, 53,
68, 70, 72, 73, 79, 81, 83–85, 88, 89,
104, 109, 129, 131, 139, 182

Promotion of information technology, 140

Prosperity, 3, 4, 9, 10, 13–15, 22, 40, 76, 105,
141, 145, 146, 159, 166, 167, 175, 178

R

Rectification of style of thinking and work, 125

Reform, 17, 24, 32, 45, 47–56, 58, 60–66, 72,
80, 82, 85, 98, 132, 149, 163, 183

Right, 10, 12, 18, 19, 25, 27, 33, 37, 38, 40, 41,
43, 46, 52–54, 56, 69, 75, 76, 79, 82, 83,
99, 101, 103, 104, 106, 110, 112, 128,
160, 166, 172

Road confidence, 149

Rule by law, ix, 25, 27, 69, 87, 92, 94, 97–116

Rule of virtue, 115, 116

S

Scientific construction of the party, 98, 99

Scientific development, 55, 184

Self revolution, 93, 125, 183

Socialism with Chinese characteristics, 2, 5–7,
23, 35, 43, 61, 85, 92, 94, 97, 98, 114,
120, 128, 145, 149–154

Socialist, 11, 22, 25–27, 45, 46, 48, 51, 54, 57,
60, 62, 70, 77, 78, 80, 83, 85, 91–93, 97,
98, 100, 101, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116,
139, 152, 154–156, 159, 161, 163, 169,
176

Socialist market economy, 13, 17, 22, 47, 60,
136, 149, 155, 168

Spiritual independence, 93, 171–176, 178, 183,
184

State governance, 87–90

Strategy, 15, 25, 27, 33, 64, 87, 88, 99, 106,
139, 167

Stratum, 71

Superstructure, 24, 46, 66, 68–70, 77

System innovation, 5, 17, 25, 26, 47–50, 128

T

Theoretical self-confidence, 159–161

Top-level design, 63–65

Two Centenary Goals, 106

W

Well-off society, 21–23, 25, 28–32, 34, 76, 98,
99, 150, 163

X

Xi Jinping, 8, 11, 16, 18, 45, 61, 63, 65, 90, 92,
100, 104, 110, 119, 141, 163, 171, 174,
176, 177, 181–184